

L I N G - N A M

LING-NAM
OR
INTERIOR VIEWS OF SOUTHERN CHINA
INCLUDING EXPLORATIONS IN THE HITHERTO
UNTRAVERSED ISLAND OF HAINAN

BY
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TO
RICHARD MORRIS, ESQ.,

OF DONCASTER,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

AS AN EXPRESSION

OF

FRIENDSHIP AND ESTEEM.

PREFACE.



PART from the cursory glances bestowed by travellers upon the coast cities and their immediate surroundings, but little is known by the general public of the extent and nature of the Empire of China, while the great interior, with all its rich variation of surface, is almost an unknown country. The nature of this country, the distribution of its people and products, and its stores of mineral wealth, are matters of interest to all who wish to know anything about the home of that most ancient and multitudinous people. Favoured by peculiar opportunities, I have traversed the interior of south China in all directions. Sketches of my journeys have from time to time appeared in the *China Review* and the *Chinese Recorder*. They have been received with general favour, and the desirability of placing them before the public in book form has been repeatedly urged upon me by those who have read them. The interest also which I have found to invariably follow my lectures and informal talks on China leads me to hope for a favourable reception for this volume of sketches. The Island of Hainan, which

is here laid open for the first time to the reading world, is of much special interest from a political, a commercial, a geographical, and an ethnographical point of view. The title of the book, "Ling-Nam," means South of the Ridge, and is the general name given by the Chinese to the southern portion of the empire.

The maps of Central Canton, Northern Canton, and the Island of Hainan have been prepared from the author's MS. notes, and, with five obvious exceptions, the illustrations are *fac-simile* reproductions of ink sketches taken by a native artist.

B. C. H.

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VICTORIA HARBOUR, HONG-KONG.

L. I N G - N A M

CHAPTER I.

THE ENTRANCE TO CANTON.



THE traveller from the east or from the west usually receives his first impressions of south China from the charming and picturesque island of Hong-kong. Entering the harbour of Hong-kong in the early morning, its quiet, lake-like beauty impresses one favourably, as it lies almost land encircled between Victoria Peak and the high hills on the mainland opposite. Its waters, usually placid, but often stirred into wild confusion by the dreaded typhoon and other storms, are well covered with a busy and animated maritime life. Steamers from all parts of the world come and go incessantly, bearing a rich and varied commerce. Sailing-ships from Oregon, New York, Norway, or Australia, bringing cargoes of timber, kerosene, and other goods that admit of long transit, and taking matting, rattan, and similar articles in return, lie in the outer circle. Grotesque junks from the north coast of China, on their semi-annual trips, and an almost endless

line of motley craft peculiar to a Chinese port, from the clumsy red-sided, dragon-eyed passenger barge, to the little mat-covered sampan, fill in the details of the scene.

Beyond this thronging life on the water rises the city, beautiful for situation and tastefully laid out. Skirting the shore are the long streets, the Praya and Queen's Road, along which the principal streams of traffic flow. Merchant houses of fine proportions and most comfortable appointment, and the extensive barracks for the British troops, occupy the central portion, while the inferior structures of the Chinese hong stretch far to the east and west. The streets rise one above the other in terraces far up the slopes. Many of the residences are of palatial dimensions, surrounded by ornamental grounds filled with tropical plants that flourish luxuriantly. Roads high up the hillside have been constructed at great expense, and extend for miles east and west, affording facilities for most attractive walks and short excursions in Sedan chairs.

Government House occupies a conspicuous site, overlooking the harbour and town beneath, and is surrounded by broad parks and gardens. Many sheltered roads lead to the upper parts of the town, shaded by evergreen arches, which the interlacing branches of the ever-present banyan have woven. Profusely flowering creepers and tree-ferns of wondrous size and grace overhang the walls and line the walks that lead up ravines, where art has assisted nature, not only in confining the wayward mountain brook to its rock-bound channel, but in bringing rare plants to mingle with the native beauties. These, with opportune seats

in secluded nooks, offer cool retreats from the heat of a tropical sun.

Among the chief attractions of the island we place the Botanical Gardens, where an unusual number and variety of rare and beautiful plants flourish in great luxuriance under the assiduous and efficient care of those in charge.

It is less than half a century since Hong-kong came into the possession of Great Britain, and, although it then appeared to be but a barren, uninhabited rock, it has proved unusually rich in floral treasures. The work of afforestation has been actively carried forward, hundreds of thousands of young trees having been planted over the hills, and the native growth of the island protected from the depredations of Chinese wood-cutters. As a result of this work, the rocky hills are becoming gradually clothed with trees, and the island fast assuming the appearance described by travellers centuries ago when its well-wooded slopes and profusion of fragrant flowers attracted their attention, and made the name Hong-kong—"Fragrant Harbour"—one of real poetic import, and no mere fancy. In the family of ferns alone over one hundred and twenty species are enumerated as being indigenous to the island, besides the many that have been introduced from abroad and successfully cultivated.

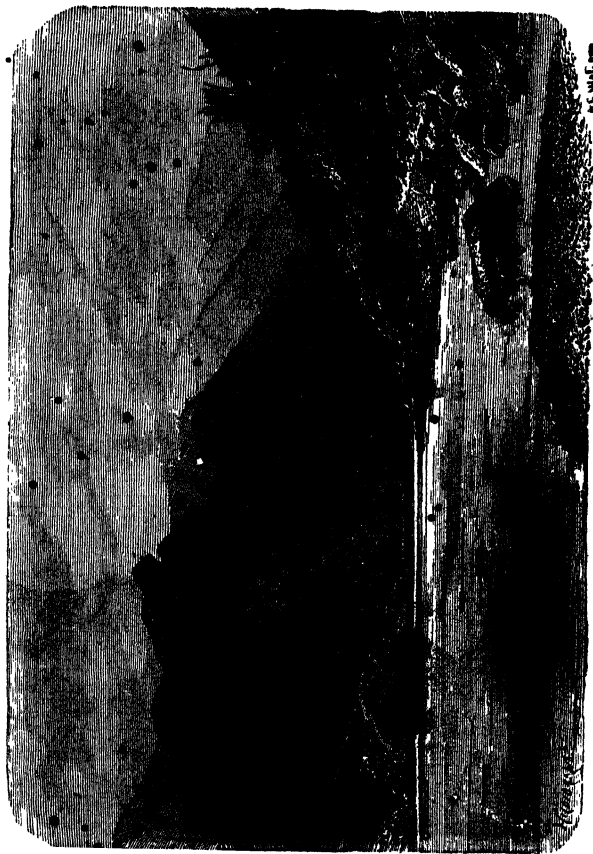
- Above the botanical gardens rises the peak, reached by a well-constructed footpath, up which strong coolies bear Sedan chairs with comparative ease. Besides the main peak, on which the signal station stands, are several others of lesser height, on the slopes of which are many houses and cottages highly prized by the citizens as summer residences. These peaks, which lie fully open to

the strong sea breezes have become a most popular resort, and all the land available for building purposes has been bought up, while the construction of roads in all directions has brought the isolated peaks into easy communication with each other and the town below.

• But Hong-kong is not Canton, and the phases of life shown among the Chinese there are modifications, more or less divergent, of the real life seen in the middle kingdom itself. The houses they live in, their modes of doing business, and even their social life, are widely different from the same things under the rule of the mandarin.

The peculiar jargon of "Pidgin English," so widely used, greets the ear as something at once harsh and ludicrous, as we hear such expressions as the following: "My wantchee you catchee chow-chow chop-chop," to which the reply comes, "Man-man my waitee dat coolie come back, he belong one piece fulu man too muchee chin-chin joss," or the following in a silk shop: "More better you cum shaw my one piece, sillik numba one look see," to which the shop-keeper objects, "No can my makee too muchee loseee, you no likee, maskee, my chin-chin you come back."

Leaving Hong-kong by one of the very comfortable steamers that traverse the Pearl River to the provincial capital, we pass through a succession of attractive river scenes, until we reach the narrow pass of Fu-mun, or Tiger Gate, otherwise known as the Bogue. Military stations rise on either side, all fresh and white from recent repairs, with guns, banners, and heaps of ammunition, together with some thousands of soldiers, which



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SCENE ON THE PEARL RIVER.

show the importance attached to the place as one to be held at all hazards against invading forces. Besides the land fortifications are several gunboats and a supply of torpedoes, ready to be placed in the channel should necessity require. Their estimate of the importance of this pass, which commands the entrance to the whole broad expanse of Canton waters, is not exaggerated; and if their skill in fortification and use of the means of defence were equal to the occasion, they could hold it against almost any force. Above the Bogue the river is still very wide, and is bordered by broad fields of rice and extensive banana plantations, with high mountains in the distance. The "lotus-flower" pagoda stands on a lofty hill opposite the mouth of the East River, so placed as to throw back over the land the good influences which the strong current of the river would otherwise carry off to the coast.

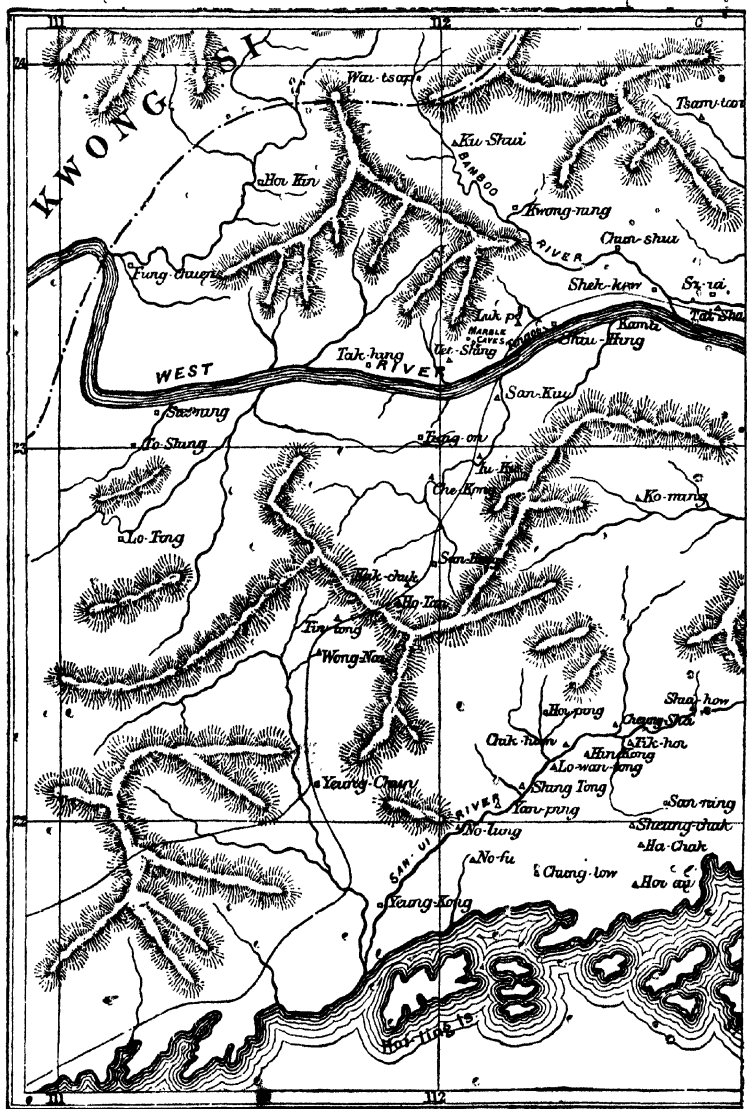
The steamer calls at Whampoa, once the anchorage for ocean ships and the site of a busy trade, but which, since the opening of Canton as a treaty port, has sunk into insignificance, being almost forgotten in the rush of traffic between Canton and Hong-kong.

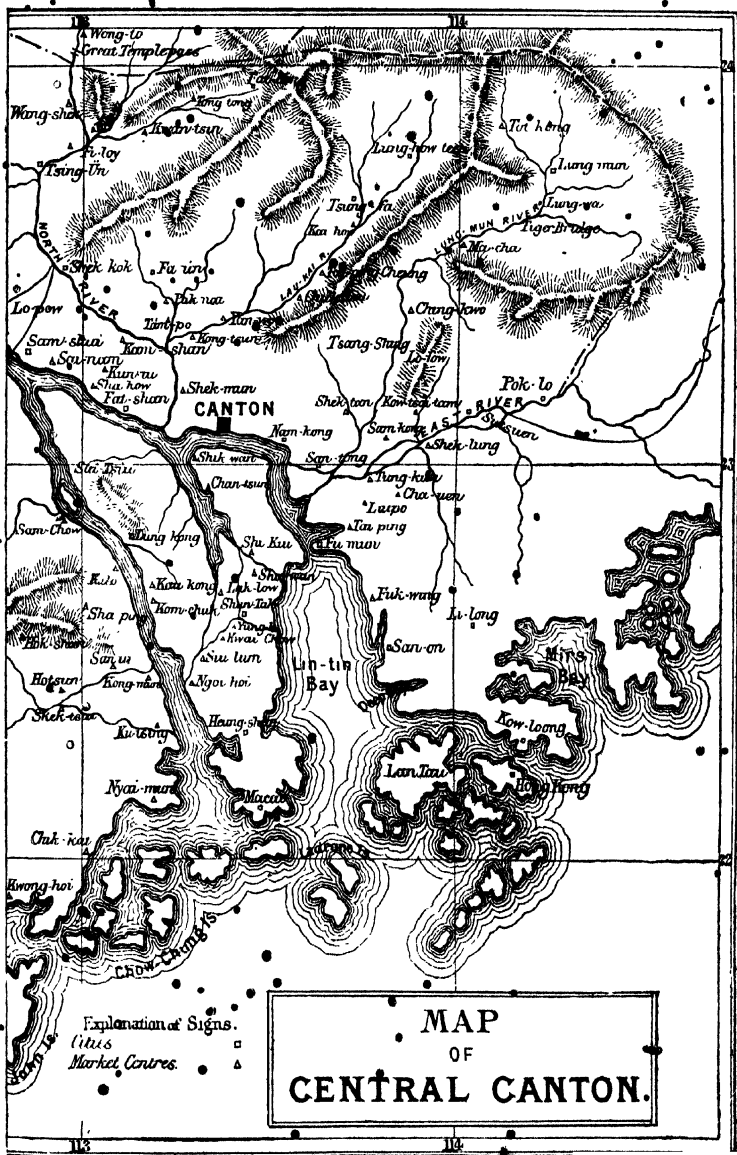
Two fine specimens of pagodas appear on the left as we proceed, and abreast the second are extensive fortifications on the island in the river and the mainland as well. Passing these, the towers of the "City of Rams" begin to appear distinctly, the French cathedral rising conspicuous over all, both for its size and for the beauty of its architecture. We are soon in the midst of the boats that densely line the river on both sides for a distance of six miles, backed in some places by rows of wooden huts, set

on piles above the slimy mud of the tidal river. Scores of immense black barges are used as warehouses for salt, the sale of which is a Government monopoly, while similar vessels farther up receive cargoes of grain brought in for temporary storage. Junks, cargo-boats, floating-stores, and a dozen varieties of passenger barges, with innumerable smaller craft, swarm on all sides, or lie packed in solid phalanxes half across the stream. A score of gun-boats, of various sizes, well equipped with the most recent improvements in gunnery, show the naval armament of the city, to which should be added a hundred or more war junks, brave in their display of bunting, the name of each commander emblazoned in letters a foot or more square in the centre of a large triangular flag. Drifting slowly by a large collection of flower-boats, gay with lamps and mirrors, and richly furnished with black-wood sofas and embroidered curtains, the scenes of nightly revelries, where the richer youth of the city indulge their passion for feasting and debauch, the steamer pulls up to the wharf. Dire confusion is often created among the slipper-boats, whose anchorage adjoins, by the surging of the steamer against their outer lines, causing them to jump, and sputter, and dart about like a swarm of ants, their owners skilfully managing the light, shell-like craft, whilst they vociferously hurl maledictions at the great steamer.

At first sight, the whole city seems one solid mass of low houses, with here and there a square tower rising above its humbler neighbours, the narrow streets being scarcely discernible as we pass up the river. From the breezy deck and comparative quiet of the steamer we are

suddenly transported into the midst of the hot atmosphere and seething masses of humanity that crowd the wharf and press through the narrow streets. It takes but a moment to realise that we are in China. Every sense is assaulted and overwhelmed with proof that we are in the midst of a people of strange speech and peculiar habits. It seems an effort to breathe, and the wonder to us is that people can live in such pent-up quarters. This feeling, ere long, wears off in a measure, and we soon become accustomed to streets but eight or ten feet wide ; become indifferent to the crowd of curious gazers constantly at our back ; display admirable fortitude in the presence of sights and smells that were staggering at first, and are fully absorbed in all the new, strange phases of life presented in the streets. Every one seems busy and good-natured. The rush of coolies with their burdens ; the whirl of the jade-cutting wheels ; the din of the brass foundries, the clang of the forge, the clatter of the silk loom, worked by hand ; the monotonous thud of the gold-beater's hammer, the patient stitching of the embroiderers, under whose skilful fingers grow patterns of wondrous beauty ; the markets, with hurrying throngs bringing in fruits of every variety, vegetables, and live fish ; and the thousand other employments carried on in shops opening full on the street, impress us strongly with the fact of their great industry.





CHAPTER II.

“THE CITY OF RAMS.”



IN order to see the city to advantage some central point should be chosen from which to make excursions; we therefore select, as the most convenient point of departure, the group of mission houses on the river's bank a short distance below the steamer's wharf.

There we see the great hospital which for nearly half a century has been a fountain of beneficence to the suffering Chinese. Founded by Dr. Parker, it has for the past thirty years been under the efficient care of Dr. Kerr, who, besides being a surgeon of extraordinary skill and success, is also one of the most devoted and self-denying men the world has ever seen. The annual attendance of patients is from 16,000 to 24,000, and the number of surgical operations performed is from 1,000 to 1,200 every year. A large class of medical students, including three women, now under instruction, give promise of the spread of true medical science in the south of China.

Across the street is the female seminary, with one hundred and forty pupils. It has been brought to a high degree of efficiency under the superior management of

Miss Noyes, and is proving a source of light and knowledge to the women of the land. These institutions are indicative of the future, and deserve a closer study than we can give them in the rapid glance bestowed.

Sedan chairs, borne by coolies, are in waiting to bear us through the maze of narrow streets, which, in their labyrinthine character are utterly bewildering to the stranger. A few steps bring us in front of one of the square towers observed from the river. It is a pawnshop, where money is advanced on clothing and valuables at high rates of interest, and where people can deposit articles for safe keeping. Ascending the narrow winding stairs, rows of packages, each labelled carefully, fill the tiers of shelves. The rates of interest are usurious, and the pawnbroker is the virtual possessor of all that comes into his hand.

Regaining the street, we come, after two sharp turns, face to face with two eating-houses, where the peculiar shape of the articles exposed for sale attracts attention. Closer inspection shows them to be dogs, the tip of the tail or the foot attached leaving no room for doubt, while the whole body of a puppy freshly dressed and ready for the kettle is held up by the grinning attendant. A covered pot near by displays a card, on which are these enticing words, "Pure, sweet, black cat always on hand inside," and lifting the wooden lid, a collection of what might be cat, rabbit, or something else for aught we know, is seen.

After a few more turns through dingy, crooked streets we come to the hall and temple of the Swatow Guild, a magnificent structure with highly-carved pillars and

richly-ornamented cornices and ceilings. It is an assembly hall for the merchants of Chin-chow, where they meet to transact business. A certain idol is chosen as their patron, to which regular worship is paid, while once a year a series of theatrical performances are given in the



THE FRENCH CATHEDRAL, CANTON.

rear court, where a pavilion, with a permanent stage, is erected in front of the main reception-hall. This reception-room, called the "Hall of the Southern Pearl," sparkles with mirrors and chandeliers and vases of antique porcelain, while the walls are decorated with curiously-written scrolls and ancient drawings. The temple was

erected at a cost of two hundred thousand dollars, and is now receiving an addition that will almost double the original size.

Entering the city through the Oil Gate, we pass tubs of live fish offered for sale, and are borne through the tin-ware street, past the shops where ivory and sandal-wood carvers are busily engaged with their little knives, chisels, and files turning out articles that find their way to every land, until we come to the French cathedral. Occupying a most desirable location, on the site of the official residence of the famous Viceroy Ye, with several acres of ground enclosed, it excites the envy, and not unfrequently the open hostility, of the populace. The ground was obtained in restitution for property destroyed in the interior many years ago, but the people believe it to have been wrested unjustly from the Government. The cathedral itself is a fine Gothic structure, built of granite, and will compare favourably in size and proportions with many of the renowned churches of Europe. It rises above every other building in the city, its tower spires showing conspicuously for many a league. It is not simply the spirit of arrogance which they trace in so lofty a structure, but the omen of ill luck which their theory of geomancy shows it to be, that leads them to regard it with the greatest disfavour, and has made it necessary to station guards of soldiers for months at a time to protect it.

Leaving this finest piece of architecture in the south of China, our course leads us through the streets of the rich jade-stone shops, where various ornaments in every shade of green are displayed in the greatest profusion,

and where the tastes and purses of all can be suited from a pair of earrings for fifty cents up to bracelets for three thousand dollars. Curio shops, with unique collections of rare porcelain, bronze, or ivory, invite our inspection.

Passing the barn-like offices of several petty mandarins, near which are rows of shops, where bows of various strength, with arrows and all that is necessary for the outfit of a military contestant are supplied, we find the street obstructed by a funeral procession. In advance of the coffin, which is borne by four stout coolies, runs a man with rolls of white paper cut in the form of coins, which he scatters along the street. This is to buy up the way, that the spirits may not annoy the soul of the dead as it passes with the coffin. Behind the coffin staggers a man clothed in sackcloth, his head bound with a white turban, supported by two attendants, who hold a bowl before his face to catch his tears, while he loudly laments the misfortune that has bereaved him of a father. The procession must take a circuitous route outside the city wall, to reach the place of burial, as no corpse is permitted to enter the city.

Diverging from the main street to escape the ill-luck of following a coffin, our coolies bring us to the execution ground, a triangular piece of land where criminals are beheaded. The wretches are carried hither in baskets, and, bound hand and foot, are placed in kneeling posture, while the executioner, if he be skilful, severs each head at a blow. A sword so used is considered an object of great interest, and even clergymen have been known to purchase such bloody mementoes of the place. It is a

veritable potters' field, the space being used, in the interval between executions, as the drying-ground for the pottery works adjoining.

Re-entering the city, we pass the arsenal, where guns are cast and munitions of war prepared under the superintendence of men trained in western methods, and soon find ourselves in the open court before the Emperor's Temple called the "Man-Shau-Kungi," or "Palace of Ten Thousand Ages." It consists of a series of halls, one behind the other, built of wood painted red, with dragons in white outlined over the surface, and roofed with tiles of imperial yellow. No image of any sort appears within, only a large gilt tablet, on which are inscribed the words, "May the Emperor live ten thousand years, ten thousand times, ten thousand years." Worship is here offered by the officials alone, on New Year's morning and on the Emperor's birthday, and special mourning rites performed at stated times on the occasion of the death of certain members of the royal family. The New Year's ceremonies are by far the most conspicuous and important. At that time every official in the city, from the lowest to the highest, must pay homage before the imperial tablet. The gates of the city are open all night long to facilitate the arrival of the mandarins. The lowest in rank goes first, so that the highest may have some one to receive him, and sends word to the next above him that he has started, and after a certain interval he sets out, sending a similar message to his superior. In this way they gather, those below a certain rank—that is, from the Prefect downward—remaining in the court in front, while the Tao-tais and all

above them assemble in the entrance hall. The civil mandarins are received on the east side of the pavilion and the military on the west. They come in their robes of state to the number of a hundred or more, and, it being winter, are usually clothed in the richest of sables. Each has his attendants, who bring cushions for him to sit upon, and a trunk containing citizens' clothing, so that he may be ready, should sudden news come of his removal from office, to adopt immediately the ordinary dress. It is interesting to watch their modes of greeting. As the civil mandarins come in, the first three or four greet each other on equal terms, each bowing low, with clasped hands. As those higher in rank appear, they greet the lower in groups of twos or threes, the Hoppo, or Superintendent of Customs, always a member of the royal family, giving one general bow to all, while the Viceroy responds to the low obeisance of the whole company with a horizontal stare, standing erect with his hands folded before his chest. The military kneel in squads as the Tartar general, their chief, comes in, while he responds by hurried bows as he hastens along the line. When all have assembled and daylight approaches, they proceed in a body to the second court, and face the open door of the hall where the tablet is seen. A crier is stationed, who calls the postures in a deep, sonorous voice, saying, "Kneel," and they fall on their knees; "Bow the head," and all bend over; "Prostrate yourselves," and they fall on their faces; "Arise," and they all stand up. The order and number of these bows and prostrations are regulated by law. No form of prayer is offered.

Entering the old city through the "Gate of Literary

Brightness," we come to the great hall of examinations, where the candidates for literary honours once in three years compete for the degree of A.M. They come to the number of twelve thousand or more, and are shut up in cells, six feet by three, for twenty-four hours at a stretch, while they write essays, odes, and historical disquisitions on subjects selected from the old classics. About one in each hundred succeeds in leaping the Dragon Gate, as the usual metaphor expresses it.

Proceeding thence, we pass the largest Confucian temple in the province attached to the Prefectural College, and the great temple of the God of War, and reach the street leading from the Great South Gate to the office of the Provincial Treasury. The cries of a courier to clear the street for the procession causes us to stand aside, and soon a small cavalcade on ponies with jingling bells appears, coolies carrying present boxes, others with banners and great gongs, while behind them, in a chair of state borne by eight coolies in uniform, sits a portly mandarin; his satin robes, with embroidered breast-piece, hat with a red button and peacock's feather, are noted as he passes. It is His Excellence the Viceroy on his way to pay official calls. The rear is brought up by a motley assortment of half-grown boys and men in red coats, tall wire hats, bearing pikes, flags, and numerous red panels, with the honours bestowed on his excellency inscribed.

This temporary obstruction creates a dense crowd in the street, to escape which we enter a mission chapel, where an audience of perhaps two hundred people are listening to an American missionary, who, speaking with fluency

and animation, is holding their attention while he expounds the doctrines of Christianity.

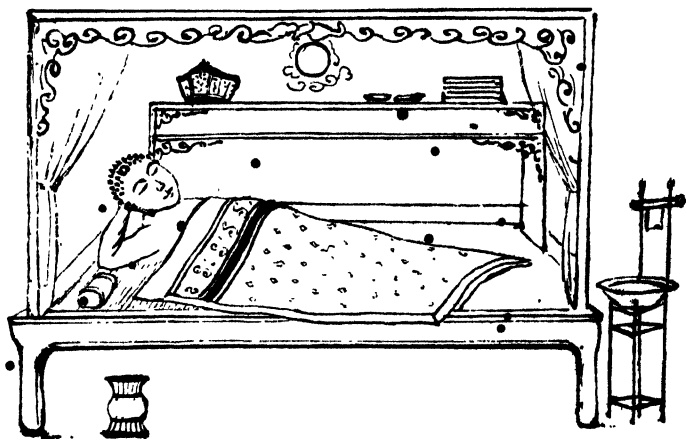
Under the double gate we pass one of the oldest structures in the city, dating back to the fourth or fifth century, stopping for a few moments to examine the water clock in the tower over the gate, which has been measuring time by drops for several centuries.

Entering the crowded thoroughfare that bisects the city in a line from the east to the west gate, we soon come to the city Palladium, often called the "Temple of Horrors," where idolatry in its most rampant form is always to be seen. About the doors are throngs of beggars, most persistent in their claims for the wealth-giving cash, while inside are itinerant traders, tinkers, dentists, herb-doctors, jugglers, fortune-tellers, sweet-meat-traders, gamblers, and a perfect babel of noise and disorder. On either side, in separate stalls, are fine representations of the Buddhist hell, where the most hideous physical tortures are depicted, and at the main shrine is a throng of worshippers, men, women, and children, prostrating themselves. Delicate ladies, who ordinarily would scarcely venture to a neighbour's house, are here pushed and jostled in the crowd as they seek some boon from the patron deity. Clouds of incense and smoke from burning paper and candles, combined with the heat, suffocate us, while the din of the incessant explosion of fire crackers is most deafening. This temple is leased by the Prefect to a company at a rent varying from \$4,000 to \$7,000 a year, this rent, and the fortune expected in addition, being made from the proceeds of worship.

From this point we strike through less crowded portions of the city, and reach the Five-Storey Tower on the north wall, from which an unobstructed view of the city and surrounding country is obtained. This height was occupied as early as the first century of our era by Chint'oh, the first Prince of Uet. The present tower, constructed some three hundred years ago, is called the "Sea-Guarding Tower," and is supposed to control the geomantic influences in such a way as to bring peace and prosperity to the city. Tea and refreshments of the native sort may be had while the visitor studies in detail the variations of mountain, plain, city, and river presented in the wide scene before him, and enjoys the cool breezes that ever play around these heights. In close proximity, on an adjoining hill, cluster the courts and temples of the Goddess of Mercy. Up the steep flights of steps leading to this shrine devotees daily toil to receive the help of the many-handed goddess, whose attributes of "great in pity, great in compassion, saving from misery, saving from woe, ever regarding the cries that come up from the world," find a deep response in the hearts of the multitudes of this people, sunk in misery and wretchedness such as few of us can know. Ignorantly they worship a creature of the imagination, but in so doing show the groping of hearts conscious of their need of sympathy and help which the Redeemer of men only can give. . .

The wall of the city, along which we now travel, is built of sandstone, and has stood the ravages of war and time for more than a thousand years. In the interstices of the stone and brick, hanging like folds of graceful

drapery, are found many beautiful clusters of maiden-hair fern (*Adiantum flabellatum*.) We pass over the North Gate, and onward to the north-west corner of the city, where stands the oldest Buddhist temple in the south of China. Among other objects of interest we are shown a sleeping Buddha, the Knowledge Tree (*Ficus religiosa*), brought from India by Tat-mo, the great apostle of Buddhism in China, and an iron pagoda, under which is

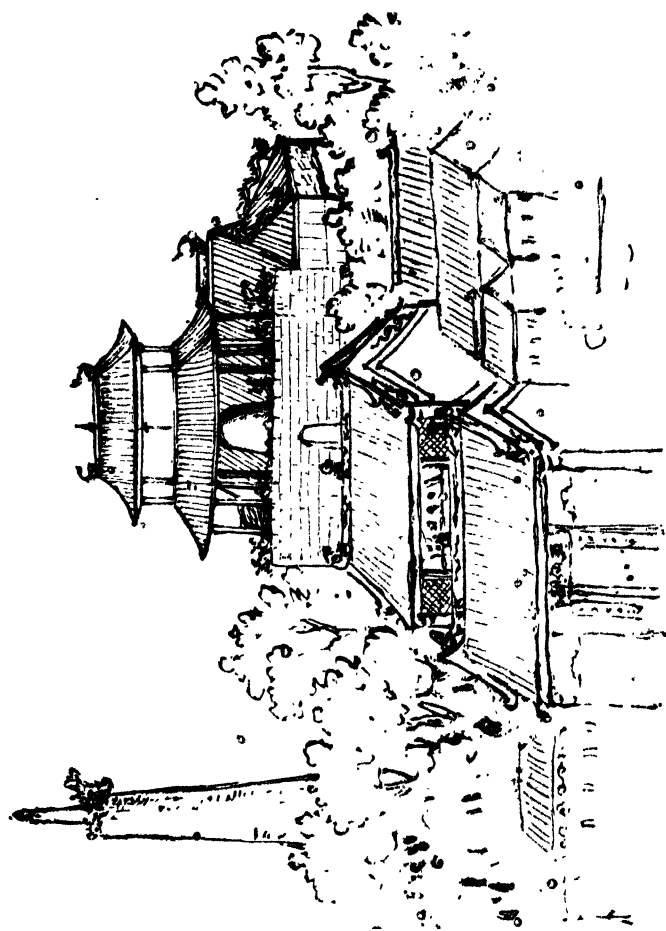


A SLEEPING BUDDHA.

enshrined the hair of the sixth patriarch, who underwent tonsure at the foot of the sacred tree. The place has a dilapidated air, and a shaven monk, bearing a fish in his hands, is not a very striking example of strict adherence to a vegetable diet. A stroll through the Tartar quarter reveals a people of darker colour, larger and more bony frames, and of somewhat different dress from the Chinese. The women appear with three brass rings in each ear, and sky-blue robes that reach to their feet. These people

form the permanent garrison of the city, and receive a Government allowance, in consideration of which they hold themselves in readiness to answer any call for service. Their part of the city shows a marked contrast to the purely Chinese portion. Their houses are smaller and poorer, and an air of neglect, thriftlessness, and decay spreads over all.

Near the office of the Tartar general rises, in stately proportions, the "Flowery Pagoda," a wonderful structure nearly two hundred feet high, built thirteen hundred years ago, and recently repaired at a public expense of \$40,000. Across the narrow street are the grounds of the English consulate, formerly a part of the Tartar general's court, where some member of the consular body always resides to vindicate the perpetual right of the English to enter at will, and live, if so disposed, within the city walls. Gardens, pleasure grounds, a park with deer, and a line of houses in Chinese style, with apartments furnished with European comfort, where the Duke of Edinburgh and other distinguished visitors have been entertained, make it an attractive place. The tower of the "Smooth Pagoda" next invites us, and entering the enclosure at its base, we come upon a Mohammedan mosque, and learn that this peculiar pagoda, unlike in shape to any other of Chinese origin, was built by the early followers of the false prophet, who extended their conquests to the east in the seventh century. It was used for centuries as a minaret, from which the hours of prayer were called, but has fallen into decay, so that no one dares ascend to its top. Inquiring of the teacher whose little school adjoins the entrance-hall, we learn



TEMPLE OF THE FIVE GENII.

that in Canton there are five hundred families who hold to the faith of Mahomet, and are introduced to a portly individual with a jovial countenance, who tells us he has performed a pilgrimage to Mecca.

The next point of interest is the Temple of the Five Genii, one of the most remarkable historical structures in the city. It derives its name from the legend of the founding of the city, in which it is related that five genii riding upon five rams, with clusters of the five cereals in their hands, appeared to the inhabitants of the place, and presenting to them the grain, with the wish that they might prosper and multiply, suddenly disappeared. The rams were changed into stone on the spot, and, so the story runs, are preserved to this day, five rough pieces of rock being exhibited as the identical stones into which the rams were transformed. From this remarkable occurrence Canton is popularly called the "City of Rams," and also the "City of the Genii." This temple, with its numerous courts, is a concrete epitome of Chinese worship, all the principal deities, to the number of a score or more, being represented. The great object of interest, however, is the tabooed bell which hangs silently in its massive tower. No hand dare strike it, and when, at the dictates of fate, its tones are heard, disaster is sure to follow. This superstition is confirmed by several remarkable occurrences. On one occasion the beam on which it was suspended gave way, and the bell fell with a crash; forthwith plague and famine desolated the city. Again, when repairing the tower, a workman accidentally struck it with his hammer, and a pestilence broke out that swept off young children in great numbers.

In the last war with China, when the British troops held the heights north of the city, the legend of the tabooed bell was brought to mind, as, aiming at prominent buildings, a cannon shot struck it, breaking a piece out of its side. The city capitulated soon after, many believing the bell to have sounded its doom. The broken bell still hangs in its tower, an object of wonder and dread to the credulous people, who know not the day when its ominous peals may be heard again.

Leaving the Tartar quarter, we make our way to the office of the Nam-hoi magistrate, where justice is supposed to be administered. As we approach, the street is lined with prisoners, with stones chained to their legs or necks, or broad wooden collars, called *cungues*, intercepting communication with the head. Some are making shoes, some sewing, others twisting rope, but all are dirty, unkempt, ill-fed, wretched-looking objects. Passing a small fee into the hand of the jailer, we are admitted into the inner prison, where squalor and misery appear supreme. Hordes of gaunt, ragged, hairy objects gather around us, begging for money, each with a piteous tale of wrong. Some are not able to rise, still suffering from the effects of the bastinado, or, with their knees raw from kneeling on broken glass or chains, or with their ankles crushed by wooden hammers. The aim of the whole course of treatment is to extract confession of guilt, and to this end torture is used, unmercifully. The jailer receives no salary, and is compelled to furnish food to the prisoners, yet his position is a lucrative one. Whence the money comes we can but imagine, but the stories of hideous methods of torture used to

extort it confirm our worst suspicions. No dignity appears in the court which we enter, and it is difficult to see how the ends of justice can be met, when no reliable means of collecting or sifting evidence are used. It usually becomes a question of which party can give the highest bribes, and the means to such unlawful gains open to the magistrate may be surmised from the fact that the incumbent of this office a few years ago, while holding his position but for ten months, made \$180,000 in addition to his lawful income.

Returning to the main street, we pass out of the city through the "Gate of Virtue," and crossing a bridge over the city moat, we enter a street where black-wood furniture, richly carved and inlaid with marble and mother-of-pearl, forms the chief article of trade. Chairs, tables, couches, stools, brackets, mirrors, and other articles are temptingly displayed. Beyond these are the furrriers, and on the same street a row of shops, where musical instruments are made, flutes, guitars, violins, etc., of the oddest shapes, a dozen varieties being offered for the modest sum of ten dollars. Passing these, long lines of shoe stores, with boots and shoes peculiar to the country, in all colours, displayed to catch the eye; marble shops, book stores, idol manufactories, incense shops, stores with silk thread of many hues, out-fitting establishments for theatres and processions, embroidery work in rooms open to the street, dozens of men, each with his own frame and pattern, stitching from morning till night, and many other interesting sights, are passed on our way to the Great Peace Gate, which leads us into the western suburbs of the city; medicine shops where ginseng, hartshorn, cassia, and a

thousand other drugs, are sold; stores for hats and caps, umbrellas, spectacles, and fans are hurriedly seen, until we reach the banking street, where scores of shops with barricaded doors show shroffs busy over baskets of dollars, tying them up in gunny bags, or handing the doubtful coin to men who sit in rows, with baskets of silver in ycee or dollars, busily and deftly separating the true from the base.

Beyond this we pass the large stores that deal in birds' nests, and offer this delicacy in quantities varying in price from fifty cents to several dollars an ounce. The remarkable combination of colour in the signs strikes us forcibly at this point; perpendicular boards, some thirty feet long and a foot wide, with the names of the shops and their business in large letters, green and gold, red and black, yellow, orange, blue, grey, and brown, painted, grained, or lacquered, form a perfect maze and wilderness of colours.

We are on our way to Curio Street, which no one fails to visit, where the richest of old porcelain is sometimes seen, *sang-du-bœuf* vases offered at \$1,500 each, rhinoceros horns, jade ornaments, and bronzes at fabulous prices. The silk shops form an attractive feature with all their rich display of fabrics woven by hand. Street after street is given up to this industry, the bright fabrics in wondrous colours and richness of texture growing slowly in the awkward looms which are manipulated by hands and feet combined. The silk firms are mostly connected with some of the merchant houses, for whom they act both as agents and producers, often being under strict articles of agreement not to manufacture for or sell to any one but

those so employing them. Before leaving the western suburbs we take a hurried look into the Wa-lam-tsz, "Flower Forest Mönastery," a Buddhist institution of wealth and note, where in one hall are five hundred large gilded images, representing disciples of Buddha who have been deified. Not far from this we are shown the ruins of one still more noted, the Temple of Longevity, which was destroyed a few years ago by an infuriated mob, excited to violence, it is said, by the immoral practices of the monks in charge.

In this vicinity, too, we find a native hospital and benevolent institution, called into existence as the rival of the missionary hospital, but doing a good work for the suffering, extending its charities to many points in the interior, where relief is given to people suffering from famine or flood, while it supplies coffins for all who die in indigent circumstances.

In the western suburbs are the residences of many wealthy people, to which the stranger from other lands with a card of introduction may be admitted. The comfort of these houses is not evident, the only difference between them and the homes of the poorer people being in the material of which they are built, the general arrangements being much the same. Straight-backed chairs, with marble seats, stiffly arranged against the walls, sofas, and divans, whose hard polished surfaces glitter in elegance, but offer no ease, abound; beds, elaborately carved and adorned with silk and satin hangings profusely embroidered, but with only mats and porcelain pillows laid on the smooth boards, are not suggestive either of down or roses. Crossing the river on

one of the many ferry boats, where the regular fare is two cash (one-tenth of a penny)—and the whole boat can be chartered for the trip for a cent—we reach the suburb of Honam, which, as its name indicates, lies along the southern bank of the stream. Furniture shops, tea hongs, and large matting manufactories occupy the chief place in its trade. Several streets are devoted to the work of porcelain painting, which is a delicate and interesting industry, requiring a good knowledge of colours and their properties to secure the right shades and combination after the ware has been submitted to the furnace.

The Great Buddhist Temple, covering several acres with its various halls and shrines, is worthy of a longer study than we can give it. The main hall, with its colossal images of the three precious Buddhas sitting on lotus flowers, is where the morning and evening liturgical services are performed, scores of shaven monks in yellow robes joining in the repetitions. Sacred pigs and chickens, rescued from the vulgar fate of the butcher's knife, are cared for in a side apartment, until they die of old age, when they receive an honoured burial. Fruit and flower-gardens extend behind the buildings, and in a remote corner is seen the furnace in which the priests are cremated.

After this general view of the native city we are drawn irresistibly to the beautiful little island of Sha-meen, where most of the foreign residents live. Formerly a mere sandbank in the stream, it has been surrounded by a strong wall, and elevated above the reach of the highest tides, and shut off from the native town by a

canal spanned by two bridges. Elliptical in shape, and evergreen in its grass and foliage, it presents a perfect ideal of retirement and comfort. Park-avenue runs through the centre from east to west, shaded by rows of noble banyans. The bund on the riverside is the favourite promenade, being open to the south, whence it receives the full benefit of the refreshing south-east monsoon through the summer. The consulates, each with its ensign floating, the church with its bell and spire, the merchant houses, spacious, comfortable, and richly furnished, the flower-gardens, tennis-lawns, and shady walks combine their varied interests and charms. To the south stretches the wide river, while men-of-war, coast steamers, and the yachts and pleasure boats of the community lie in the foreground. This charming spot was the scene of the furious mob in September of 1883, which in a few hours destroyed one-third of the houses, and changed the usual quietness into a reign of terror.

Seated in a "matrimonial boat," one of the most spacious and comfortable used by the merchants, we row up the river to the flower-gardens in Fa-ti, where Chinese florists have exhausted their skill in twisting, stunting, and deforming plants, until a tree of more than a century's growth still lives in a narrow pot, having never reached a height of more than three or four feet. In their seasons many attractive plants are seen flowering in great abundance. Camellias, azaleas, chrysanthemums, euphorbias, magnolias, jasmynes, lotuses, etc., attain great perfection in a climate where frost is a rare occurrence. Fruits for ornament are also much cultivated, and artistic arrangements of oranges, limes, loquats, citron, custard

apples, lichees, and others are very effective. In these gardens arbours and pavilions erected over artificial ponds are suggestive of summer breezes, laden with the odours of sweet-smelling shrubs fanning the dreamy occupants, of broken sunlight dancing through the vines and lattices, and the murmur of the water fretting against the sides of the pond. Such romantic ideals, however, are seldom fulfilled in the midst of all the harsh commonplaceness that meets us even in these gardens, where nature struggles to be poetic in spite of her sordid tyrants, and in colours, aroma, and luxuriant leafage succeeds to a great degree.

“ Floating down the river by moonlight, when all is quiet and serene, when the hum of the busy hive has ceased and its myriads sunk to rest, with only the monotonous tone of the watchman, or the shrill cries of some industrious vendor of sweetmeats to break the stillness, with lights from the shore and boats reflected in fairy-like radiance in the water, while the pale moon sheds its pearly light over the sleeping city, our experiences of the day seem all a dream, a stupendous freak of the imagination. But the loud calls of our sturdy rowers, as they command the throng of boats to divide and open a passage for us to the landing, recall us to the world of reality, and the many strange scenes of the day commingling in all their varied forms and colours, are fixed indelibly upon the mind.

CHAPTER III.

THROUGH THE DELTA.



THE delta of the Pearl River is one of the most remarkable in the world, in the richness of its soil, in the varied products it annually gives forth, and in the density of its population. Its apex is at Sam-shui (Three Rivers), the point where the West, North, and Pearl Rivers mingle their waters. About fifty miles west of Canton its longest side runs south-east from that point, passing through the great cities of Fat-shán and Canton, and ending in the Bay of Lintin, its whole length being about one hundred and forty miles. The west side goes down from the same point in a straight line from north to south for two-thirds of its way, when a portion of the main stream of this West River is deflected, and flows through numerous creeks and canals, dissecting the lower portion of the San-uf district, which join their waters with a stream from the west, and pour into the sea through the Ngai-mun, the most westerly mouth of the delta. Leaving beautiful Sha-meén, with its massive bund and elliptical line of evergreen banyans, behind which are embowered the stately residences of the foreign community, we cross the little harbour called by the natives

Pak-ngotam, "White Goose Pool." On the right are seen the groves and cloisters of the ancient Buddhist monastery Tai-tung, whose quiet courts and cool pavilions make it a popular resort for excursionists. Within the enclosure of the monastery is a well, remarkable, according to native accounts, for the vapours that were formerly said to have issued from it, presaging storms and tempests not only in the immediate vicinity, but at points remote in the interior and along the coast. A thick, lurid mist, it is said, issuing from some deep cavern, was wont to rise in volumes, covering the monastery and groves about, and ascending high into the air. These vapours are now said to appear in the well at certain times, but seldom extend beyond that narrow space. Accompanying the lurid mist, it is said that sounds like the cackling of geese are heard, leading to the belief that there is some subterranean connection between this well and the deep pool of Pak-ngotam adjacent. This pool, again, which is said to be in one place fathomless, is believed to be subterraneously connected with places as far north as Shiu-kwan, two hundred and eighty miles distant, as far west as Ko-chow, two hundred and fifty miles off, and as far east as Chiu-chow, about the same distance. The well in which the mist appears is also called the "Dragon Well," and is supposed to presage storms, the "pulses of the earth" as these subterranean watercourses are called, bearing in advance the warning of their approach. The outward effect of these vapours is thus described by a native rhymester—

"When Tai-tung sends its clouds of mist afloat,
Each fishing craft appears a passage boat."

Three miles down the broad river we pass Teetotum Fort, which guards the approach to the city from the south. It is strongly built, a pointed tower, or good-luck pagoda, rising in the centre, and giving it the appearance of the toy from which it receives its name. Traces of its occupation by the British are seen in the mottoes, proverbs, and names inscribed on its inner walls. It is built on a rocky islet, and on the banks adjacent several massive forts assist in the defence of this main waterway to the metropolis of the south.

To the right of this fort is the entrance to "Wong's Canal," which is passable for ordinary boats at high tide, and reduces the passage of six miles by the river to two. Its construction forms an interesting episode in Chinese annals. General Wong, an insurgent chief, was bearing down upon Canton, and had reached the junction of the two streams a few miles below the site of the present fort, where a strong force was massed to oppose him. After a series of fruitless manoeuvres, he hit upon the plan of digging a canal across the low point of land between the two streams. Favoured by darkness, his soldiers worked with eagerness, and ere the fifth watch struck, had not only finished the canal, but had transported their boats through it to the main stream, whence, with the enemies' behind, they pressed on to surprise the city by an early and unexpected attack.

This canal leads us into one of the main arteries that intersect the delta, called Fat-shán Creek. On the right, as we ascend, the low rice lands are bordered by hills covered with tea plantations, and large villages set in shady groves. On the left is a series of hills called Sam-shán,

which were formerly celebrated as one of the most attractive resorts near the city. The "clear dawn after rain," as seen from these hills, was considered one of the great sights of the time. They still preserve some of their former attractiveness, and are frequently visited on short excursions. In the centuries past, when covered with groves, the charm of the early morning after refreshing showers had quickened their manifold varieties of trees and plants into new life, may easily be imagined. The scene indicated is one of Nature's loveliest, appealing to the purest instincts of man's nature.

A short distance beyond the Sam-shán, we come to the scene of Admiral Keppel's famous exploit. It was during the war of the allied forces against China, and the object of the special expedition then in hand was to capture the great trading mart and manufacturing centre Fat-shán. The Chinese, aware of the approach of the British war vessel, had massed their whole naval force at one point. As the British drew near they saw a line of war junks stretched across the river with their guns trained to a certain point. Perceiving at once the weakness of their position, the admiral ordered his vessel forward under full pressure of steam, broke through the line of junks, receiving, as he passed, a simultaneous fire from all the junks, which, owing to the suddenness of the movement and inaccuracy of aim, fell harmlessly about the ship; and before the Chinese could recover from their surprise was speeding on toward the city.

Fat-shán is the second city in importance in the south of China, and 500,000 people are found in its compactly-built, closely-packed houses. Manufactories of various

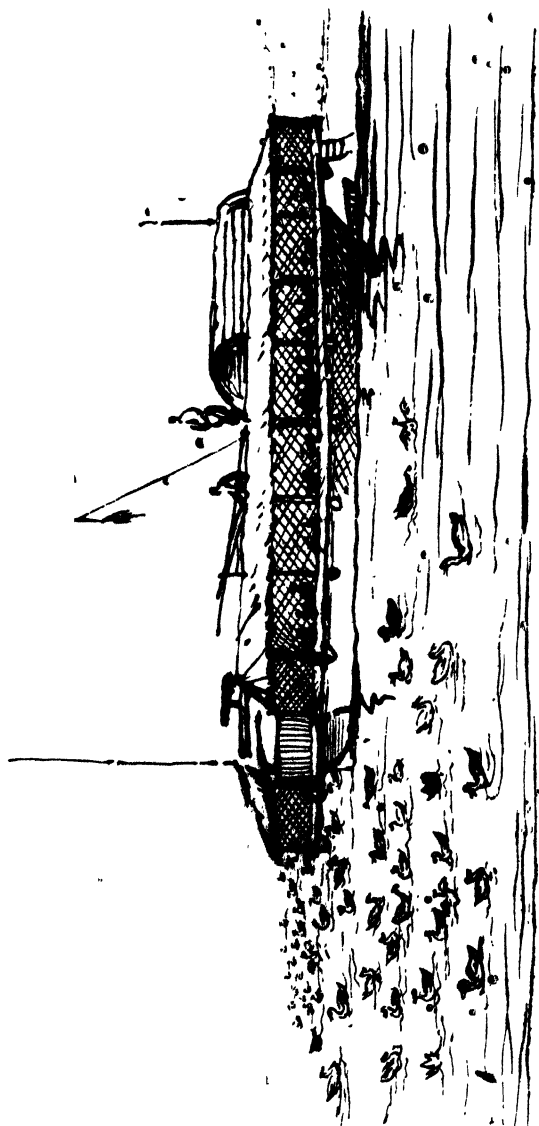
kinds abound, producing cloth, silk, embroidery, rattan and bamboo work, porcelain, brass, and ironwork. For the latter large cargoes of worn-out horseshoes and various forms of old iron are shipped from England. A large business is done in cassia, grain, oil, and timber. The city is intersected by two canals, which furnish the greatest facility for transport. The boat traffic between Canton and Fat-shán is immense. The proposition to run a small steamer over the fifteen miles between these two cities threatened to cause a mob, the tens of thousands of people dependent upon the boats for a living joining a general outcry, so that the project was given up. The telegraph line recently laid passes through Fat-shán, the general office being in the Wesleyan Mission Hospital. Two attractive bungalows on the outskirts of the town, where missionaries reside, two flourishing churches under the direction of the London and Wesleyan Missions, and the hospital with its thousands of patients, show satisfactory progress in Christian and benevolent work.

On a bend of the stream a few miles to the south is the town of Shek-wán, famous in China for its glazed earthenware, seats, flower-stands, lattice-work, balustrades, flower-pots, tiles, animals, fruits, vases, plates, and ornaments in endless variation are produced. This ware is very cheap but ornamental, the glazing being done in many colours, blue, green, white, and red predominating. It is sometimes mistaken for the more costly porcelain, an instance of such confusion occurring in the New York Custom House a few years ago. A resident of Canton brought among other things two large flower-pots of this

ware, which cost originally between four and five cents each. The owner's valuation was not accepted, and the articles were appraised at five dollars each.

From this point, looking south and south-east, we see stretching out the great rice-producing district, in the centre of which stands Chan-tsün, an important town with 100,000 people. A brisk trade with the ports on the sea coast is carried on, grain, salt-fish, and oil being the chief articles of commerce. This town was the port of Canton during the last war, when the city was under siege. The great rice plains of this district, partially submerged at high tide, are dotted with small hills and clumps of trees, which mark the sites of villages. Immense harvests are gathered continually, the land in some places yielding three good crops in a year.

These rice fields form the feeding for thousands of ducks, and the great lumbering boats—floating cages, in fact—in which they are conveyed from one point to another, are often striking features in the landscape. The ducks are hatched by artificial means, establishments for this purpose being found all over the country. The eggs are placed in baskets or wooden tubs, with chaff, bran, cotton, or fine grass between the layers. These baskets are set in rows in rooms heated to the proper temperature by charcoal furnaces. Daily attention is paid to the eggs, changing their position, testing the temperature, and other necessary precautions. When each brood of ducklings hatches out they are sent to market and sold. Many people devote their whole time to rearing ducks, and will have hundreds and thousands under their care. They keep them in boats of a peculiar



A DUCK BOAT.

shape made specially for the purpose. These odd-looking craft are pushed up and down the streams in search of good feeding-grounds. Their favourite resorts are the paddy fields. Tying up beside the slender embankment that encloses the rice field, the duck-herd opens the door of his great cage, and his flock, clattering and quacking, rushes into the muddy field. Abundance of insects, worms, shell-fish, and crabs reward their search. After harvest the ducks come in as gleaners, and do their work thoroughly. They are under good discipline, and quickly respond to the calls of their keeper, following the boat as it moves along the stream. When evening comes a plank is put out and the ducks called home. With a palm leaf brush on the end of a pole the keeper herds them in. The beating which the last one is sure to get causes great commotion among the last dozen. The keeper shouts and thrashes the tardy ones with his brush, causing them to rush pell-mell, each anxious to escape being the last.

- The whole extent of this district is so intersected by canals, as to render every point easily accessible by water, and the incessant lines of boats of all shapes and sizes add life and variety to the scene.

“ With crystal net of waterways
The teeming land is spread ;
And gliding through the liquid maze ,
A varied fleet is sped.”

The northern half of the western side of the delta is devoted to the cultivation of the mulberry shrub and the production of silk. As we enter the silk district, the most prominent object before us is the picturesque group



THE SAI-TSIU HILLS.

of the Sai-tsiu hills. These hills form a plateau about one thousand feet above the level of the sea, with seventy-two peaks of various heights rising up. The highest of these is the Tai-foh peak, from the top of which an unobstructed view of the richest and most populous district of south China is gained. Visitors to this peak frequently start from the town below at midnight, in order to reach the top in time to see the sun rise. A good paved road, lined with eleocarpus and liquid-amber trees, leads up the mountain side, through wooded glens, over bridges spanning deep ravines, beside cool grottoes and springs of delicious water. A large portion of the land among the hills is devoted to the cultivation of tea, the Wan-mo or "Cloudy Mist" tea from the Sai-tsiu hills having a great reputation among the Chinese.

Fourteen villages, of not less than a thousand people each, are found among these hills. Amidst the peaks are many gorges and cascades to delight the lover of nature, the most noted among them being the Tsui-ngam, "The Many-Hued Gorge," the Chü-hang, "Vermilion Ravine," and the Pák-wan, "White Cloud Cascade." Of all these charming spots Pák-wan is the most attractive. The great scholar Pák-wan had his study in this picturesque ravine, shaded by groves of fine trees, with the cool water ever pouring down the gorge. The cataract falls over the precipice above in a double stream, and flows out below under a natural bridge of stone. Half-way up is a small cave, reached with difficulty, before the opening of which the spray of the falling cascade hangs in a misty veil. Masses of delicate ferns, refreshed by

continual moisture, hanging richly over the walls, and within are stone seats on which to rest while listening to the music of the waters, and watching the sunlight break into rainbow colours through the falling spray. A native poet of some repute has described the scene in a couplet—

“Below the bridge, three streams their flows divided pour;
Above, the heavens are seen as through an open door.”

Around the base of these hills, and for miles on all sides, the land is covered with mulberry plantations. The aggregate of many small interests go to make up this vast industry, and the division of labour affords employment for all ages and sexes. The mulberry shrubs are cut down in winter every year and used for fuel. The roots remain, and around them the soil is spaded and heavily fertilised. The surplus moisture is drained off into fish ponds, sunk deep in the midst of the fields. The young shoots sprout with the opening spring; and when the first crop of leaves is ready, usually in April, thousands of boys, women, and girls are employed to strip them off, and pack them in baskets. Hundreds of men, in little boats propelled by paddles, dart back and forth along the canals, carrying these baskets of leaves to the market-places, where they are weighed by men detailed for that purpose, and purchased by the owners of silkworms. In some of the larger plantations cocooneries are found, but the silkworms are usually reared in the houses of the people in greater or less quantities, as they can afford. A crop of leaves matures every six weeks, in which time also a fresh brood of silkworms hatches out. The utmost yield of leaves is

six crops in a year, the second and third, occurring in May and June, being considered the best. The mulberry leaves vary in price from twenty-five cents to one dollar and a half per hundredweight.

The silk cocoons, when ready to be unwound, are first plunged into hot water, and then set out to dry, after which the silk is unwound. Hundreds of women may be seen sitting by their doors winding the gossamer threads from the cocoons. This thread is hung up in dry, airy places, until all trace of moisture disappears. Sometimes, on clear, warm days, boats will be seen moving up and down the streams with rows of men and women winding off the silk, of which quantities will be suspended from frames along the top of the boat, that the wind blowing through may dry it. After this process it is ready for the market, and is bought up by companies and shipped to the centres of trade, a tax of one dollar per hundredweight being levied by the town corporation on all the raw silk exported from that district. In silk culture everything is done by hand, and everything is utilised. The refuse of the silkworms and cocoons is cast into the ponds to feed the fish, and the silkworm chrysalis, whose house has been appropriated, becomes an article of food, one of the delicacies of the season.

The people in the silk district are the most conceited, turbulent, and bitterly anti-foreign, and at the same time the most enterprising of all the people in south China. An attempt was made a few years ago to introduce machinery into one of the great silk establishments near Sai-tsiu, but the place was twice mobbed within a short time and the owners compelled to remove the machinery. The

hills described are the great natural feature of the district, which brings, according to popular belief, good luck to the land, and the people look with jealous eyes upon the visits of "outside barbarians," who, professedly attracted by the charms of natural scenery, they suspect of coming to spy out and carry off the luck of the place. They have peopled the hills with spirits and deities of various kinds and degrees of power, and offer them constant worship. Beside these regular offerings to the presiding genii, special religious festivals are frequently held, in which theatrical performances play a prominent part. Their theatres are large square structures, composed of bamboo framework covered with matting and palm-leaf thatch. A gallery is set apart for ladies, and the women of Sai-tsiu show their independence by going in large numbers to the theatre. The performances are kept up day and night, and through their attempts to light the place with the imperfect means at command accidents frequently happen. A frightful occurrence took place a few years ago in this district, in which a theatre capable of holding ten thousand people was destroyed by fire. The narrow entrance, and the dense crowds driven to desperation in their fear, made escape difficult, so that no less than three thousand people, most of them women, perished in the flames. Despite such experiences the semi-religious performances in these theatres are still regarded as means of good luck to the place.

The high-spirited disposition of the Sai-tsiu women is shown in the organisation of an anti-matrimonial league, in which the fair damsels of this fortunate district

bind themselves under solemn pledges never to marry. Such a course is so contrary to the whole history and spirit of Chinese institutions, and so daring a challenge to the practices of ages, that one cannot but admire the spirit of independence and courage from which it springs. The existence of this Amazonian league has long been known, but as to its rules and the number of its members no definite information has come to hand. It is composed of young widows and marriageable girls. Dark hints are given as to the methods used to escape matrimony. The sudden demise of betrothed husbands, or the abrupt ending of the newly-married husband's career, suggest unlawful means for dissolving the bonds. When they submit to marriage they still maintain their powers of will. It is a common saying that when a man marries a Sai-tsiu woman he must make up his mind to submit to her demands. The same characteristics are said to prevail among the women of Loong-kong, the next large town to the south, one of their demands being that the husband must go to the wife's home to live, or else live without her company.

No one who has not passed through this district can have any just conception of the density of the population. Besides innumerable villages, there are the great towns of Koon-shán, Sha-t'ow, Loong-kong, Loong-shán, Kow-kong, Lak-low, and Kom-chook, all lying close together. Of these, Kow-kong is the largest, and forms a little kingdom in itself. It is said that during the war at the close of the Taiping rebellion, a census was taken with a view to estimating the fighting strength of the people, and it was found that Kow-kong alone could

furnish 300,000 able-bodied men as soldiers. The limits of this town lie within a space five miles wide and seven or eight long. The town is composed of coteries of villages around the main centre of trade. They have one of the finest schools in the empire, the Ue-lam Shü-uen. Its students everywhere take high rank, and several of the leading gentry of the place have won the highest literary honours. The corporation controls all the town affairs, not allowing Government officials to have authority except in rare cases. Gambling, prostitution, and other evils are forbidden, and the laws, in most cases, are rigidly enforced. It is said that a man may take his daughters to any place of entertainment in the town without exciting suspicious remarks. Their chief hatred, however, is against the foreigner, and they have sworn never to permit the hated barbarian to obtain a foothold in their town.

The tide of wickedness thrown back from the gates of Kow-kong finds ready admission through the open doors of Loong-kong, the adjoining town. There gambling and all forms of vicious amusement flourish under the especial patronage of the gentry. The Kow-kong swarm the streets of the neighbouring town, and pour their money into the coffers of the Loong-kong people.

• From the inner region of the silk district, the entrance to the main West River is over the Kom-chook rapids. When the tide is full it is an easy matter to cross these rapids, but when the water is down, a ledge of rock at the bottom causes the stream to rush and boil in an angry way. The choice then lies between engaging a dozen or twenty men, who are always waiting for a

job, to pull the boat up by main strength, or make a *détour* of ten miles to the south by canal. A heavy stone wall protects the bank from erosion, and facing the rapids stands a temple to the Queen of Heaven, the patron goddess of sailors. The boatmen always offer incense and wax tapers, sometimes fowls and pork, at this shrine to secure a safe passage.

- Emerging from the narrow creeks and canals of the low-lying delta, the broad West River appears rolling down in stately volume. Its waters rise and fall with the tide, which checks, but cannot overcome, the strong current. Beyond its western bank to the north rise the Ku-lo Hills, covered in places with a heavy growth of camphor trees, which are hewn and shipped to Canton to be made into boxes, chests, and furniture. Large plantations of the fragrant Ku-lo tea, so highly prized by the Chinese, cover the slopes of these hills, at the foot of which lies the town of Ku-lo with its opium-besotted people.

- Sailing down the broad stream, a deep sense of peace comes over us as we lie dreaming on the upper deck, under the shadow of the grass-mat sail. Our reverie is broken by the captain asking if we want to buy a fish, and we descend to barter for a fine specimen of sam-lai, or Chinese shad, a fish of most exquisite flavour. A group of large grey cranes on the sandy beach attract attention as they stand, three or four feet high, lazily searching for shell-fish.

Before us, as we sail, rises the pyramidal form of Chü-t'ow-shan, "Pig's-Head Hill," a rocky island crowned by a small watch tower. A guard boat marks it as a

military post, and the remains of fortifications show its past uses, while on a hillside, on the shore opposite, is the grave of a company of braves, who fell in battle here. The broad West River is not always so placid as it seems in the days of early spring. Once during a stormy January we made the journey up its stream, when its waves dashed high on the rocky shore. Long lines of men attached to the tracking-ropes, triple and quadruple the usual number, gave evidence of the force required to move the boat, while several dismasted boats and the wreck of a barge on the rocky head of Chü-t'ow-shan showed the force of a storm on its waters. Its channel is deep enough to admit steamers of the largest draught, but hitherto Government launches and small revenue cruisers are the only steam vessels that have traversed its waters. For two hundred and fifty miles it may be navigated by larger ships, and the city of Ng-chow (Wu-chow), within the borders of the province of Kwong-si, be brought into direct communication with the commercial world. On our left, as we go down with the current, rise the towers and pagodas of many populous towns, while far to the east stretch the plains of Heung-shan, from which many emigrants have gone to the Hawaiian Islands.

CHAPTER IV.

AMONG THE PALMS.



LEAVING the West River by a narrow canal, we soon reach the city of Kong-mun, a busy, wealthy place, containing about 100,000 people. Scores of clumsy sea-going junks lie in rows abreast of the town; throngs of sampans, rowed by women with their heads covered by striped Madras handkerchiefs, swarm in all directions. Long streets, with many shops equal in size and appearance to those in Canton, run parallel with the canal. Behind the town rises a long hill, on the summit of which stand two trees, that grow so closely together and interlace their branches in such a way, that from a distance they appear as one. The lower one, with wide-spreading branches, is an evergreen banyan, while the tall, spare form of the other, whose straight trunk rises from amid the banyan's branches and towers far above it, bare of leaves in the winter, presents a striking contrast to the mass of green below. Unique in shape, they form a landmark visible for many miles around.

A well-paved road leads from Kong-mun to the city of San-wei, a distance of five miles. The way is lined with a succession of large villages, some of which are of historic

interest. Near the village of Pák-sha is seen the tomb of the great scholar Chan-pák-sha, whose tablet is found in the great Temple of Sages in Peking, and whose works, in voluminous editions, comprising essays, poems, and treatises on various subjects, are exposed for sale in every book store. The village of To-ui attracts attention as the home of a native Christian preacher, and as having three thousand males all of the same family name, no people of any other surname being found in the village. Wooded hills to the right form a pleasant contrast to the level plains to the south, and from the foot of some gush forth living streams of water, so clear and limpid that the Chinese overcome their repugnance to cold water, and stop to refresh themselves from these pure fountains.

Passing Kong-mun, we enter the palm district, which forms a limited area, extending about twenty miles from east to west, and about ten miles from north to south. The restriction of palm culture to this particular region is a matter of much interest, and leads to some suggestive inquiries as to the particular qualities of the soil and climate in this district. That the limitation of this industry is a matter of necessity and not of choice is proved by attempts made at various times to cultivate the palm in other places, attempts that have always resulted in failure. In the flower-gardens about Canton these fan-palms (*Livistona Chinensis*) grow as ornamental shrubs, but their leaves, though beautiful in appearance, are of no value in the manufacture of fans.

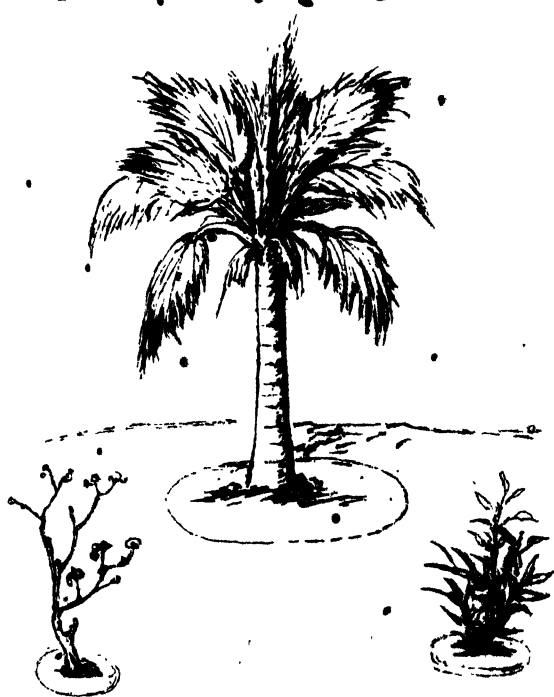
Be the reasons what they may, we find a section of country, in extent as described, given up almost wholly to the production of the fan-palm. Several thousand acres

are covered by those plantations. Both high and low ground may be used, but the greater portion of the plants are found in low lands surrounded by embankments. The number of plants to the acre varies according to the soil and situation. Six hundred to an acre is considered a sparse planting, and the fans produced are of a coarse texture, the yield being from six to ten thousand each year to the acre. When about six thousand palms to the acre are planted they produce a much finer quality of fans, sometimes called, "glass fans," from their delicate texture and transparency. The annual yield is proportionately greater. From each tree from five to fifteen fans are cut annually. The age at which trees begin to produce fans of value is seven or eight years, but they frequently live to be several hundred years old, producing all the time.

The district of San-ui supplies the Chinese market with all the palm-leaf fans used by the people, as well as those exported in such large quantities. The number annually produced amounts to several millions by actual count. About one hundred Chinese firms are engaged in the business of collecting and manufacturing these fans. The work of preparing them, after they have been cut, employs from ten to twenty thousand men and women, the latter being chiefly employed in binding the fans with thread or coloured crape and silk borders.

The various steps in this great industry are as follows:—First, planting the seed, which soon sprouts, and after several months puts forth leaves above the ground. After one year the young plants are set out more or less thickly, according to the desire to have coarse or fine fans. A

greater part are for the coarse varieties, because of the nature of the soil, the labour required, and the amount of fertiliser needed. Among these coarse kinds fans of a superior quality may be secured, if, when the leaves are about to open, they are bound with grass threads to keep



FAN PALMS (*Livistona chinensis*).

them from expanding. When thickly planted the process of expansion is retarded for want of space, and consequently all are of fine texture. These unopened leaves are called "fan-pencils." On the trees which produce both coarse and fine qualities there are always old leaves, which cannot be used for fans. These are called "pung-

liu," "thatch materials," and are used to thatch boats, mat-sheds, booths, and temporary structures of various kinds, also to make mats, cushions, rain-coats, etc. When the trees reach the age of thirty or forty years, and thence upwards to several hundreds, they produce very large fans, sometimes five feet long and three feet broad. These are used in the place of hats and umbrellas as protection against both heat and rain. Only old trees produce nuts, which appear without flowers (?), in shape like small white olives. One tree will yield from two to three thousand nuts in one season.

The second step is the process of manufacturing the leaves into fans. This process involves several stages. The leaves are first brought in green from the fields, carried in bundles on their shoulders, or sent by quantities in boats. They are then dried or cured by spreading them out in the sun by day, and heaping them up in stacks at night, repeating this process daily until they are thoroughly dried. They are then piled up in stacks like hay until needed in the manufactory. Each leaf is trimmed to the proper shape, the ends going to make material for rain-coats or thatch. After this they pass through a course of firing over sulphur fumes, by which they are rendered very smooth and white. Then comes the dressing-off process. The stems are trimmed and polished, or cut off entirely, as may be desired, and they are then given out to women to hem. These women work very cheaply, and may be seen in almost every street, sitting by the doors of their houses stitching at the fans, or carrying them to and from the shops. Although they often receive but a mere pittance of two or

three cents a dozen for their work, yet this even is a great boon to many who would otherwise be reduced to utter destitution. The ornamentation is done by artists, who draw figures of birds, men, animals, landscapes, etc., in various colours with pencils, and also by the application of hot iron, a more difficult and expensive process. Mottoes, classical quotations, and local proverbs are thus inscribed.

The fan trade centres in the city of San-ui, which contains a population of 250,000 people. It is the largest city of its class in the province, and was honoured as the temporary residence of the last emperor of the Sung dynasty. This unfortunate monarch, but a boy in years, as he fled with his band of faithful adherents before the sweeping vengeance of the Mongols, found a refuge for a time in San-ui. It was only a short pause that he made, but the house in which he lived is still called the Sung palace, and pointed out with great pride by the citizens. To the south fled the fugitives, until they reached Ngai-shán, on the sea coast beside the most westerly estuary of the Canton river system, the Ngai-mun. There they made a final stand. Luh-siu-fu, the faithful minister and tutor of the young emperor, stood by him to the last. For a few months their scattered forces were gathered, and their stronghold fortified, and hope began to revive in the hearts of the fugitives. The conquering hosts of the great Kublai Kahn pursued and assailed them from the sea, and a great naval action closed the catastrophe. The Imperial fleet was scattered and destroyed. When all hope had vanished, Luh-siu-fu, having first compelled his wife and daughters to throw themselves into the sea, seized the

boy emperor in his arms and rushed into the waves, preferring death to captivity. Thus perished the last of the Sungs, A.D. 1278. A temple on the hill, with tablets to the memory of Luh-siu-fu, the emperor, and others, marks the historic spot.



PAPAYA TREES.

San-ui is also famed for its superior oranges and papayas. Adjoining many of the palm plantations are orange orchards, in which a variety of sweet orange, unsurpassed in flavour, is produced. Perfect in shape, with a slightly corrugated skin and a peculiar round mark at

the end, they are easily recognised. When exposed for sale each individual orange will be stamped with the name of the firm, the best qualities bringing from ten to fifteen cents a pound. Papaya trees are abundant, their luscious yellow fruit melons hanging in tempting clusters under the large tropical leaves.

The finest qualities of grass-linen are produced in this district. The flax is sent from interior provinces, and distributed through the country. The women weave it on handlooms, and bring it out for sale at the market town. Grass-linen markets are always held in the early morning from daylight until seven or eight o'clock, for what reason I could never learn. It is bought up by agents of Canton houses, bleached on the meadows to the east of San-ui city, where the clean water from the springs that flow out from under the hills gives it a peculiarly glossy whiteness.

In San-ui the Wesleyans and Presbyterians have had missions for many years, with varying degrees of success. The history of the latter's acquisition of their present property is interesting. Compelled for years to occupy a dark, uncomfortable house, efforts were made continually to secure more desirable accommodations. A small temple stood a few doors to the east. It was the property of a village a few miles distant, but was little used. Someone suggested the possibility of securing it for a chapel, when the elders came and said they would not rent it to the Christians for fifteen thousand dollars a year. Nothing further was then said, but within a year from that time these same elders came and offered it to the Christian preacher for twenty dollars a year on a lease of twenty

years. The lease was signed by all the elders and men of influence in the village, and a heathen temple converted into a church for the worship of the true God.

Behind the city rises a fine group of mountains, prominent among which are the two lofty spires known as Kiver-fung, "Sceptre Peak," and Wan-fung, "Cloud Peak." In a ravine on the slope of Sceptre Peak is an old monastery, almost deserted, from whose crumbling portico we look out upon the plain beneath, the city grey and sombre, its high north wall thickly overgrown with ferns and feathery grasses, the palm fields glistening in the sun, the boats threading their way in all directions, the distant Nagi-mun, with its temples and shrines, recalling the tragic past, and the glimmer of the ocean waves beyond. The slopes of this hill in the spring are covered with flaming red azaleas.

On the same hill, somewhat higher up, is a small temple now in ruins, called the Sin-neung-min, "Fairy-Maiden Temple." According to Chinese custom, the elder daughter should marry first. If she should die before betrothal the parents go to this or similar temples, or have some one go for them, and betroth her to the spirit of some man. This is done by writing their names on tablets in the temple, and after this ceremony is performed they believe the spirit will not return to trouble the family. The whole place is supposed to be filled with the spirits of the dead, and people are now afraid to go into it. They cannot get workmen to repair it, so that it is in a ruinous state. The people were incredulous when I told them of my visit to it, and assured them that the only creature I saw near it was a fox, which fled at the sight of me.

In the midst of these San-ui Hills is said to be the Loong-tam, or "Dragon Pool," in which the great storm dragon resides. His presence and influence are indicated by the clouds of mist that envelop the mountains, and the torrents of rain that are poured forth. In the time of drought the officials ascend the peak to worship the rain dragon, and if their formal prayers are not availing, they present a pig as a propitiatory offering, throwing it into the pool. This stirs up the dragon, and makes him send forth rain. The pig, it is said, will afterwards be picked up in the Ngai-mun, ten miles away, the supposition being that there is some subterranean connection between the two. Persistent search, however, has failed to reveal this wonderful stream, whose clear, never-failing fountain is believed to be the hiding-place of the dragon. The nearest approach to a pool or a spring is a swamp or morass, thickly overgrown with grass, the probable abode of reptiles of an inferior order.

The history of this dragon is given in the following story. A boy in one of the villages near by caught a snake, which he kept in his desk at school. Every day he fed it with rice, and when the school closed took it to his home. His parents did not like the snake in the house, and set it free in the garden. For a long time it remained there, making no attempt to bite any one, and winning for itself the reputation of being a very good snake. One day, however, it bit a man who had offended it in some way, and he died. The people, in their anger, caught it and cut off its tail. It escaped to the hills, where it was afterwards changed into a dragon, but, having no tail, it could not ascend to the heavens. It

was compelled to remain on the earth, and selected this mountain spring as its home. It is spoken of as the "Tuen-may Loong," "the Bob-tailed Dragon." At the dragon-boat festival in San-ui the boats, made in the shape of the dragon, are all "bob-tailed," in honour of their presiding genius. To this dragon are attributed all the storms that come from the south-west. The great tornado of April 1878, which swept across the western suburbs of Canton, destroying eight thousand houses and ten thousand lives, was traced by the people to the San-ui Mountains, whence the evil wind stirred into violence by the dragon was supposed to issue. The form of the dragon, even down to its "bob-tail," was traced in the collection of *débris* which the tornado gathered up as it sped onward.

A few miles south of the city is a pagoda erected on a small hill near the water. It is called the Nai-tsz-tap, "Mud-children" pagoda. According to local tradition, the country immediately around it was formerly submerged, and the water was full of crocodiles (children of the mud?), which would swarm over the land, and not only destroy the crops and cattle but the people also. This pagoda was built to restrain their outbursts. It proved so efficacious that their power was broken, so that after its erection they ceased to trouble the people, and soon disappeared. The people believe they are held in bondage under the pagoda, which is very old, having been built about a thousand years ago. A probable explanation of the traditions and superstitions connected with this pagoda, is that formerly there was a subterranean connection between the waters which covered this part of

the country and the warmer waters to the south, in the Gulf of Tonquin and elsewhere, which would help to account for the presence of crocodiles, and that the convulsion which raised this land above the level of the sea broke up that connection, and caused the disappearance of the crocodiles. This would also account, in a measure, for the special adaptation of this district to the cultivation of the palm, a warm subterranean current, producing that condition and temperature of soil necessary to their perfect growth. The land may still retain these conditions, though the warm currents have ceased and the amphibians disappeared.

Among the rice fields and palm gardens of this southern district are many large villages, from one of which several thousand men have gone to America. Several hundreds of them, known as "the Jews," Chinese-chin, live in Brooklyn. Evidences of superstition and the use of charms are abundant in these towns. An epidemic had broken out a few months previous to my visit to this place, and I saw boards placed at the entrance of each village with uncouth figures painted on them. These figures were called "the divine commanders, who control evil." The setting up of these boards was done with elaborate ceremonies, and they were supposed to have the effect of warding off disease, and of preventing the evil spirits which cause disease from injuring the inhabitants.

Beyond San-ui we enter a broad stream from which the Chinese come who emigrate to America and Australia. The low, marshy banks, destitute of footpaths, with mud, into which the bamboo poles sink eight or ten feet, make navigation difficult, except when fair winds favour.

There is little in the natural features of the country to attract one, and the character of the people is often a sad disappointment. Many of those who return from abroad are most bitter in their feelings against people from the west. In the town of Shui-how a number of these men broke into the Wesleyan chapel, destroyed the furniture, and maltreated the native preacher. Having been abroad, they professed to have learned all about the religion and customs of Christian lands, which they pronounced unfit for Chinamen to receive. They declared that foreigners were guided by "t'een-wan," astrology, and the Chinese by "tay-wan," geomancy, and proceeded to take violent measures to expel the Christian astrologers from their midst. Their hostility was further shown one day, when a medical missionary was quietly fishing along the bank of the stream, and some men from a passing boat cursed the "foreign devil" in English and Chinese, and fired several shots at him, of which fortunately none took effect.

• Many large towns are found on the banks of this stream, and in several villages and important centres Christian schools and churches have been established. Some conception of the density of the population may be gained from the fact that from the top of "Centipede Hill," opposite the town of Chik-hom, three hundred and fifty villages can be seen. In many of these the new white houses, glistening beside the verdant fields of grain, show the homes of those who have returned from abroad, and put their earnings into houses for themselves and families.

Toward the headwaters of the smaller streams that unite to form the main river the country becomes moun-

tainous, but the hills are all bleak and barren, presenting a most dreary appearance. Mineral deposits are found in several places. Iron ore is reported to be abundant in the north-west portion of Yan-ping district, coal deposits being found in the same locality. This belt of iron and coal reaches across the dividing ridge into the Yeung-chun district beyond. The ore, of which specimens have been obtained from several places, is micaceous specular ore, containing seventy per cent. of iron and thirty per cent. of oxygen. Near the town of No-fu gold is found, and has been worked to a limited extent by men returned from the mines in California and Australia. Many portions of the country show the blighting effects of the Hakka rebellion that swept over this section about twenty years ago; villages in ruins, and broad tracts of rich plain land still uncultivated, bear witness to the desolations of the marauders.

The coast line of these districts is indented by many bays and inlets, with small islands adjacent, which form the haunts of pirates. The depredations of these freebooters add an element of uncertainty to life along the coast. Many thrilling tales are told of capture and rescue. A favourite method of the pirates is to wait until the men of the village have gone to their work in the fields, then pounce upon the unprotected place, carry off the women and children as slaves, murder the sick and helpless, and appropriate all the portable property. Their prisoners are sometimes held for ransom, and exposed to torture to secure promises of larger sums. If, at the end of the time fixed, no ransom is brought, they are disposed of as the robbers see fit.

On one of the islands off this coast, called by the Chinese Sheung-chun, and by Europeans St. John, probably an imitation of the Chinese name, is the tomb of Francis Xavier, the first Jesuit missionary to the far east. A church, which may be seen from the deck of passing steamers, stands near the tomb. Pilgrimages are annually made to this shrine, excursion boats running from Hong-kong and Macao for the accommodation of the pilgrims. The people in these districts speak a peculiar patois, entirely unlike anything heard in other parts of the province. It differs widely from the pure Cantonese, and is strictly confined to this particular section of country. Go ten miles beyond to the east, north, or west, and almost pure Cantonese is heard. A syllabary of this dialect has been made by Mr. A. Don, of New Zealand, formerly resident in Canton. No certain clue has been found as to the cause of the strange peculiarities of the speech of this people. Some seek to find in this dialect traces of the original language of the indigenous tribes found when the Chinese first came to the south. Certain resemblances to dialects in central and north China, and especially to the southern mandarin, have led to the theory that the remnants of the army that followed the last Sung emperor, and others of his adherents who escaped destruction, were scattered over these districts, found homes among the peasants of the land, and left their permanent mark in the speech of the people. We have no certain knowledge as to the number of those who followed the fortunes of the Sungs, but they must have formed a very considerable force to have held Kublai's Mongols at bay so long. When Luh-siu-fu rushed into

the waves it was the signal for a general dispersion, and we may well believe that they made haste to hide themselves. Received by the people around, who doubtless sympathised with them, and commanding respect and influence because of their superior acquirements and connection with the emperor, they would soon impress their character and speech upon the simple peasants among whom they lived. The prevalence of the surname Chiu-, which was the family name of the Sung emperors, is also cited as a proof of the number left behind after the great disaster at Ngai-shán.

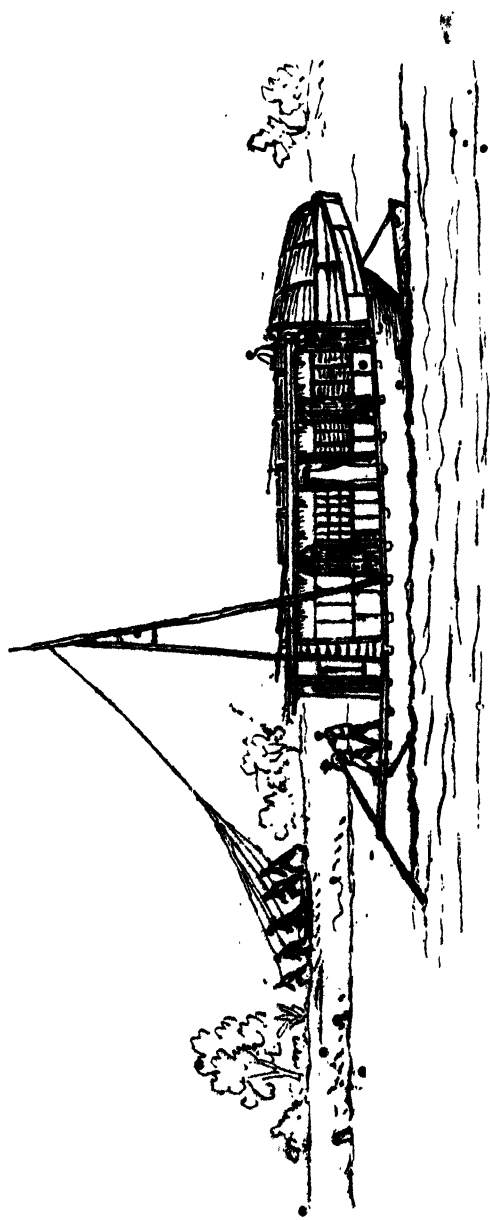
From the head of navigation above the city of Yang-ping a postage-road leads over the dividing ridge to No-loong, whence boats convey the traveller down to the important city of Yeung-kong, from which centre of trade and influence roads and streams diverge, both seaward and landward.

CHAPTER V.

TENG-OO AND THE MARBLE CAVES.



THE traveller in south China must of all things possess patience. The modes of travel by sedan chairs and boats are, at their best, very tedious, while so many circumstances combine to create delay, that he whose expectations exceed twenty or at most thirty miles a day is doomed to endless disappointments. Comfort is the great desideratum, and to secure this we engage a boat called a "Ho-tow," so named from the town, which we hope to reach at the end of this chapter, where these boats were first and are still made in great numbers. They are sometimes called "mandarin barges," because the officials in travelling from place to place almost invariably use this kind. They are of various sizes, those we usually employ being about thirty-five feet long, ten feet wide, and seven feet high in the cabins, with holds two feet deep under the floors. Such boats are divided into four compartments, three of which form a suite of two bedrooms and a sitting-room, which can be turned into a dining-room when occasion requires. The fourth compartment is in the stern, and is given up to the crew, except so much as is needed for kitchen purposes. The



A HO-TOW BOAT.

crew on each boat of this size consists of eight men, one of whom holds the rudder, a clumsy wooden affair with a blade about ten feet long. Another holds the great steering oar on the bow, while the others row, pole, or track the boat, as occasion requires. On either side of the boat are foot-walks about a foot wide, with cross strips fastened with bamboo thongs eight or ten inches apart. The use of these foot-walks and cross strips becomes apparent when we encounter a strong current, and the men have to push the boat forward with their bamboo poles, bending down to the work, setting their feet against the cross strips, and uttering, meanwhile, the most harrowing cries. The peculiar cries of these boatmen are most startling as they rush along the boards, which, loosely fastened, clatter under their feet, screaming as though in intensest agony "Ay-ly-chy-ly a-a-a-h-h." They claim that such vocal exercise greatly assists them in their work, and tell of a certain man who exacted a promise from his crew to abstain from such noises. They kept their promise, but were so used up at the end of the voyage that they vowed never to be inveigled into such rash promises again.

All who travel to the west and north from Canton must pass through Fat-shán, and follow the Pearl River to Sam-shui. For several miles below the latter place the river is very broad, and when filled with boats under sail presents an attractive sight. On one occasion we had toiled against tide, and wind, and current, passing many boats, whose crews, exhausted, had tied up to wait for a change of wind, when just as we reached this open stretch a good strong breeze from the east sprang up. Besides

the boats toiling heavily along the shore, no life on the water was to be seen, but in a few moments after the breeze arose you could see the boats in all directions pushing off from the banks and hoisting their sails. In a short time the whole face of the stream was covered with hundreds of boats of all sizes sailing before the wind. It was a unique and picturesque sight;—sails of all shapes and sizes, from the great butterfly wings of the passenger barges to the little squares of the fishing smacks, some new and shining, with the name of the maker in colossal letters that could be read across the river, some all tattered and torn, some with improvised sails of blankets or the movable cover of the boat turned up edgewise to catch the wind, while their crews sat peacefully enjoying the breeze or whistling to keep it up.

Beyond Sam-shui, the West River flows down in a majestic volume, between high banks in a channel several miles wide in places. In one of these broad reaches, near the town of Pui-shui, we find large flocks of wild fowl. Hundreds and thousands of them gather in the shallow water along the south side; wild geese, ducks of various kinds, snipe, cranes, and egrets are seen. The spirit of the sportsman is aroused, but the distance is too great, and the toil of crossing the broad stream is only rewarded by seeing them rise in clouds and fly to other feeding-grounds. A group of mountains, visible for many miles, assumes more distinct outlines as we advance; and soon the various peaks in the cluster are separated in our view, above them towering the tree-clad height of Teng-oo. These hills form one of the remarkable objects in this immediate neighbourhood—namely, the great Shiu-ting

Gorge, the Marble Caves, and the Teng-oo Mountains. Each has its own peculiar attractions, and claims detailed inspection. Flowing out from the gorge, the river makes a bend towards the north, while Teng-oo, and the limestone hills in which marble caves are found, lie a mile or two back from the river. Between them and the high cliffs which form the northern wall of the gorge stretches a broad and fertile plain. In former years a branch of the main river flowed down through this plain, washing the foot of the limestone hills, and passing near what is called Old Teng-oo, a large island with the high cliffs along the gorge in the midst being formed. At the beginning of the present dynasty, about the middle of the seventeenth century, a heavy dam was built above the city of Shiu-hing, and the whole volume of water turned into the main stream. In this way a large tract of valuable land was redeemed from the over-flowing water. The dykes at this point are a matter of great and constant concern to the people, the heavy freshets sometimes breaking through them, while the river, rejoicing to find its former course, carries destruction through the plain, leaving large deposits of sand and gravel in the fertile fields.

At the mouth of Loh-yan-hang, a little creek that flows down from the hills, we find the nearest point to anchor our boat and prepare for an excursion to the monastery and waterfalls three miles distant. Mountain chairs, which consist simply of two bamboo poles, with a board suspended from the middle for a seat, are found in waiting at the foot of the great cotton trees on the bank for those who wish to be carried. A good paved walk leads

in the most direct line to the place, crossing low fields for a mile, and then following the course of the mountain brook, which is lined by heavy embankments to restrain its outbursts. Entering the gateway of the hills between grass-covered slopes, we slowly ascend the stone stairways until we cross the first low ridge. Facing us rises a steep incline covered with large pine trees, along the foot of which dashes the restless mountain brook. Beyond this wooded slope we come to the entrance of the deep, cool ravine, before reaching which is a little harbour, called the P'un-shán-teng, the half-way resting-place. On a stone tablet a native poet has traced some lines in praise of the scene before us. The following translation is by Dr. J. Chalmers :—

“ Half-way up the Terg-oo mountain's side,
By a steep and winding path, leading to Buddah's still retreat,
Hark ! the music of hidden fountains greets the ear,
And what were else all vague and meaningless
Finds in the rippling brook life and expression.
The waving pines rise graceful by each murky glen,
And the shadowy bamboos stand in relief against the distant
peaks.

There a canopy of mist covers a dark-green forest,
While here the wind in gusts is shaking the leafy boughs.
Yonder a cloud, with moisture charged, rests on the fragrant
grass,

And there again far down the falling flowers are strewed on the
dark water.

As you gaze on the birds joyfully soaring half-way up the rocky
cliff,

And tune your harp in this resting-place to a simple air,
The mountains all around seem lovingly to embrace each other,
And again the sun illumines the woody tops with gorgeous light.”

It requires years of experience in the sultry atmosphere

of Canton, with only the bare, treeless hills, so plentiful in the land, to look upon, to appreciate the delicious sense of coolness and shade, of verdure and woodland beauty that comes as we enter this valley of the Teng-oo brook. All the richness of foliage, the singing of birds, and the music of the waters comes as delightful surprise to the hungry soul which loves Nature in her pristine garb. At the foot of the winding paths that ascend to the waterfall and monastery stands a pavilion with seats and tables set beside the crystal stream. Reclining on the mossy ground, we look up at the broad arms of the giant trees covered with graceful festoons of vines and ferns, and watch the tiny squirrels that dash up and down their trunks in search of nuts and berries, or in playful antics. Crossing the brook by a rude stone causeway, we follow the path to the right along the hillside. Below us tumbles the mountain stream, gathering in deep pools or rushing over great boulders. Above us rises the fern-clad slope, thickly overgrown. Another pavilion is soon reached, from which we catch our first glimpse of the delightful waterfall called "Fi-shui," "Flying Water." The water flowing down from the height above falls over a broad wall of rock about fifty feet into a large emerald pool. Masses of ferns, begonias, and orchids line the bordering rocks. From stone to stone we step until the spray of the falling water dashes its cool drops over our faces, upturned to gaze and admire. The ledge of rock on which we stand forms the starting-point of another cascade, which pours into a deep circular basin, an ideal swimming-bath. The transparent water gives no clue to its depth, and not until an umbrella, accidentally dropped,

sinks to the bottom, and unsuccessful efforts to recover it are made, do we realise how deep it is. An expert diver at last secures it, and reveals the fact that the water is from fifteen to twenty feet deep in that crystal basin.

Retracing our steps, we take the main path up the hill, and soon come to the great Buddhist monastery, Hing-wan-tsz. It is one of the largest, finest, most richly-endowed and neatly-kept monasteries in the south of China. Passing through massive stone portals, we enter the reception-hall, where ebony furniture, mirrors, vases, screens, and illuminated scrolls adorn the room. Shaven priests in long dark-blue robes, with courtly manners, receive us, and invite us to a collation of tea and sweetmeats. Wearied with the fatigue of the steep ascent, we ask permission to prepare our luncheon, which is quickly given, and a small pavilion a few steps down the hill is placed at our disposal. No animal food is allowed within the temple walls—a rule, however, not always strictly observed. Under the escort of a monk we inspect the cloisters, which have accommodation for three hundred priests. The various halls to the Three Precious Ones, to the Eighteen Disciples, to the Goddess of Mercy, and others common to all Buddhist temples, are shown us, and also the shrines of the founder of the monastery and abbots in succession. In one of the courts is shown a camellia tree over one hundred years old, covered with scores of most perfect flowers, pearly white, with a delicate sea-shell pink in the centre. Behind the monastery a shaded path leads up to the top of the mountain some two thousand feet high, from which a glorious view of the country is gained

The history of this delightful Buddhist retreat begins near the end of the Ming dynasty, in the beginning of the seventeenth century. A wandering priest came to the town of Kwong-li, on the river's bank a few miles off, and for some religious service rendered, was presented by the Leung family with a piece of land high up in the hills. This land, the Leungs said, was so barren and rocky, that they could not even dig a grave in it, and it would be better for them to gain some merit by bestowing it upon the priest. Tigers, also, were abundant in the region, so that few people were daring enough to venture among the dense groves of the valley. The priest accepted the gift, and contriving to find shelter for his body, lived on wild fruits and nuts. He put up a number of grass huts, and gradually gathered many followers about him. In the troublous times that came at the overthrow of the Ming and the establishment of the Tsing dynasties, many fled to this place for refuge. Among the fugitives was the last Ming emperor and several other members of the royal family, who paused here in the flight toward Nan-ning-fu, in Kwong-si, where their last stand was made. This event gave prestige to the place. The name Teng-oo, originally given to the older institution on the other side of the hill, and meaning "Summit Lake," was now applied to this place, the sound being the same, but the written character changed to "teng," meaning "tripod," or trident," a part of the imperial insignia. It is only those places in which an emperor has lodged that may be called "teng," and the name which this mountain bears preserves perpetually the memory of this royal visit. From that

time forth the number of devotees increased, until the present monastery was built. It receives the patronage of many wealthy families in Canton, and is one of the most delightful resorts in the province. This side of the mountain is called "New Teng-oo."

From the village of Hōw-leuk, at the foot of the gorge, going directly through the town of Tai-chūn-uen, which is the home of the Leung family, the original proprietors of the mountain, we come to the foot of "Old Teng-oo." Thence a good broad road leads up the hillside, which was formerly covered with fine trees that shaded the path. Of these but few have escaped the wood-cutter's axe. As early as the Tang dynasty, in the eighth century, a monastery was built near the summit of this mountain, the river at that time flowing close to the foot of the hill. Near it was a perennial fountain called "Lit-pun-shek," "Split-in-half-rock," in form like a deep well, sunk in the natural rock, filled with dark-green water, almost black in appearance. This was called "Teng-oo," "Summit Lake," and gave its name to the whole mountain group. This old monastery is now in ruins and its shrines deserted. It is a pleasant tour to go up the path by Old Teng-oo, thence over the summit, and down the slope to Hing-wan-tsz; and out to the river Loh-yan-hang. The upper slopes of these hills are covered with the ornamental shrub which produces the Chinese New Year's bell-flower.

Large quantities of the branches with the unopened buds are sent to the city, where they are found in almost every house and temple at New Year's time, their delicate clusters of pink-and-white bell-shaped flowers forming graceful ornaments in jars and vases.

At the foot of the Shiu-hing gorge the native Custom House necessitates a halt and inspection of our goods and passports. The broad volume of the West River is here contracted into one-fourth its ordinary width. On either side rise abrupt rocky mountain barriers, nearly two thousand feet high. The hills along the southern side are partially covered with tea plantations. These tea fields on the steep slopes are protected, in places, by hedges around their lower borders, and the ground between the plants covered with dried grass and bracken to keep the soil from being washed away. In these hills also are found deposits of a peculiar kind of black rock, smooth and porous, from which ink-stones are made. Of this material there are many grades, some having the capacity of absorbing the ink in greater quantities than others, and adding to their usefulness in proportion. Large supplies of these stones are shipped to all parts of the country, as every school boy must have his ink-stone, and writers are even searching for those of superior quality. The demand for them is constant.

Along this gorge the rocks in places stand up like pinnacles, towers, and various other shapes, and have received peculiar names in consequence. One, called "Mong-fu," or "The Expectant Wife," is conspicuous. The legend of the place relates that the husband left his wife to go on business into the adjoining province, where some mishap befell him; and his faithful wife, after years of anxious waiting, was changed into stone, in the attitude shown by the projecting rock. In the next province, through which this river flows, a rock is shown which bears the name of "The Detained Husband," and is supposed

to represent the lost spouse, who, detained by some magic spell, returns not to his home. This pass is six miles in length, a good tracking-path furnishing facilities for navigation when tide and wind are adverse.

Above the pass the river widens beyond its normal breadth, becoming almost a lake in appearance. A short sail brings us abreast of the city of Shiu-hing, the former capital of the province. Several pagodas, on sites specially chosen, adjust the geomantic influences, so that the people may dwell in peace and comfort. For two miles along the bank the city extends, showing temples, official residences, examination halls, and other public buildings inside the city walls. It was the scene of great carnage at the time of the Tartar Conquest, one narrative stating that the slaughter of the people in the capture of the city was so great that their blood ran in streams down to the river, and tinged the water crimson. This city was the point where the first Roman Catholic missionaries, Matteo, Ricci, and others gained a foothold in 1582, and has always been one of the strongholds of the Romanists in the south of China. The Baptist and Church of England Missions have churches and schools here, with stations in several towns and villages adjacent.

The most striking objects in the immediate vicinity of the city are the groups of rock pinnacles that rise abruptly from the plains a mile or more back from the river. In these peculiar rocky cliffs are the "marble caves" so widely known, and called by the natives "Tsatsing-ngam," "The Caves of the Seven Stars." These cliffs, which vary in height from one to several hundred feet, and spring up almost perpendicularly from the

level plain, are of igneous formation, and were doubtless thrown up in this form by some volcanic action. They differ in composition from the rocks in the surrounding country. They are filled with jagged crevices and many large caves. Temples are built in various positions, some at the base, and others on rocky ledges far up the sides of the cliffs, rude stairways in the rock, and iron chains for support, being the only means of ascent. In one place the cave extends under the whole base of the cliff, forming a natural tunnel. It is filled with images of gods and heroes, and natural rock formations of great variety. In the loftiest chamber of the cave an image of the Goddess of Mercy has been chiselled out of the natural rock, and stands as though it had grown on the spot. Many of the credulous people believe the image to be a spontaneous outgrowth of the rock, no human hand having touched it, and stand in great awe of it in consequence. Beautiful birds, unseen before, of a dark, glossy-blue colour, find homes in the numberless crevices in the rocks. Marble utensils, and objects of manifold forms, are produced from the rocks here found.

The geological formation of this region is one of extreme interest. Besides these marble rocks, there are in the neighbourhood soap-stone quarries, from which materials of various colours—green, yellow, variegated—are produced. This stone is made into cups, plates, rings, images, and ornaments of various kinds. In the adjoining district of Tung-on are large marble quarries, from which fine slabs of superior grain are cut. Several monuments in the city of Canton are made of marble

from these quarries, notably the two great lions that stand on either side of the entrance to the Tartar general's Yamen. The record states that in the production and transportation of these images thirty-six men lost their lives.

Ascending the Loh-ting River, one of the branches of the West River which flows in from the south, two days' journey above Shiu-hing, we come into the region of the cassia plant. The fragrant bark, which forms one of the main sources of revenue to the Kwong-si province, and is shipped in such quantities from Canton, had not been studied in its natural state until three years ago, when Mr. Ford, of the Botanical Gardens in Hong-kong, visited this section of the country and saw it grow. His investigations confirmed the opinion of many botanists, that the cassia of commerce is the bark of the *Cinnamomum Cassia*, and not of the *Laurus Cinnamomum*, as some had supposed. Anxious to secure a supply of living plants, Mr. Ford tried to get them from the Chinese, but found them so suspicious lest their industry should suffer, that they would part with but few. He outwitted them, however, by sending his Chinese agent ahead to buy up all the young plants in the nurseries at points further inland, before they knew they were for a foreigner. The plants so secured have been sent to Ceylon, Mauritius, Jamaica, and elsewhere for cultivation.

Opposite the city of Shiu-hing flows the San-hing River, one of the smaller streams of the province. It comes from the south-west, one hundred and twenty miles, through a country of many attractions. Midway

to its source we pass the city of San-hing, situated in the centre of a great rice plain. The autumnal harvest is just ripening, and in several places we see men lift spadefuls of earth, with the grain attached, from the field, and place them in the form of small altars by the roadside. They then place wax-tapers and incense sticks into these lumps of earth, then fold their hands, and bow in worship before them. The meaning of such ceremonies seems to be thanksgiving for the harvest, and prayer that it may be safely gathered. It seems a worship of the earth itself, as the great mother of life. Near this city, in the village of Lo-tsün, is found the birthplace of Luk-tso, the sixth and last patriarch of the Buddhist Church in China. Ill luck seems to attend this spot, which one would naturally expect to find a propitious one. The land about it has become barren, and the people who live there are afflicted with premature baldness; the latter, however, is suggestive of the Buddhist habit of shaving the head.

Along the upper course of this river the country is bald and mountainous. On both sides of the stream are found the native villages of the Ho-t'ow boatmen—a numerous community. Devoting their days to life on the river, they leave most of the farm work to be done by their wives and daughters. In the mountains that line this stream the natives say many tigers find a home. Travelling much through the interior, and often in the hilly and mountainous country, I have come into close contact with the people, and have, among other things, frequently inquired about the game and wild animals that abound in various places, and have been

struck by the frequency with which they speak of the presence of tigers. For a long time I was disposed to treat their tiger stories with ridicule, and still think that many of them are greatly exaggerated; but from the mass of testimony I have received from persons directly connected with the scenes described, I have come to believe that tigers are a great scourge to the hill country in Canton. Within a few years, in the vicinity of the market town of Lak-chook, more than a score of people are said to have been killed by them. The most frequent victims are wood-gatherers, who go off alone to the hills for firewood. Two years ago, one was encountered near a village in this region, and surrounded by thirty men, who attacked him with various weapons. He was shot in the mouth and his teeth broken, but this did not prevent his killing two men and seriously wounding two others before he was finally despatched.

The year before the following scene occurred in a village adjacent. In the evening, a woman and her daughter-in-law were at work in their house, when suddenly a tiger appeared, caught up the mother-in-law, who was nearest the door, and made off up the hill. The daughter-in-law raised the alarm, but the neighbours, frightened for themselves, only shut their doors more closely, lest he should attack them. Early next morning, six men, relatives of the woman who had been carried off, went in search. Owing to a slight rain that had fallen the previous day the tiger was easily traced. He had gone up the hill, and thrown the body over a steep precipice into a deep ravine. There it was half eaten.

The son, as filial duty required, must get it at all risks. With difficulty he descended and fastened a rope about it, so that it could be drawn up. They then buried the body and went home. In the evening the tiger returned to the village, but all the people were then safely locked in their houses. He roared, so the people said, until the earth shook, but could not get at his prey. This account, with the names of the parties concerned, was given me in a manner that leaves no doubt of its truth. In this particular neighbourhood the number of pigs and cattle carried off is very great. From all accounts it would appear that the number of people annually carried off by tigers in the Canton hill country may be reckoned in scores, and of cattle, pigs, and other domestic animals in hundreds. "Why do not the people destroy them?" is the question often asked. Because they have no efficient means. Their arms are poor, their aim uncertain, and superstition keeps them in such dread of the beasts, that it is only when forced in actual self-defence that they will attack them. Near Lak-chook, the town referred to, a few years ago the ravages of these kings among the beasts were so great, that the people determined to call in supernatural help, and so held a sacrificial feast, called Ta-teen-tsiu, "An offering to Heaven," for deliverance from the scourge of tigers. The performances were kept for several days, and their efficiency may be inferred from the fact that while the services were going on a tiger came into the village where they were held and carried off a pig. The affair in which two men were killed occurred afterwards near the same place.

At the head of navigation on this stream we find

Ho-t'ow, the town from which our boat receives its name. Boat-building is one of the chief industries of the town, which is also of importance as the shipping point for goods, destined for Canton, that come by portage from the south-west. Between Ho-t'ow and Wong-nai-wán, the town at the head of navigation on the other side, stretches the plain of Teen-t'ong, "Heaven's Hall." It is circular in shape, surrounded by hills, and is given up almost entirely to the cultivation of rice. In the centre stands the market-town of Teen-t'ong, and all around stretch the broad fields with golden grain, waving ready for the sickle. The Chinese play upon the name, and often say in joke that a man has gone to Teen-t'ong, one of the usual expressions for saying "he is dead."

Six miles across this plain brings us to the headwaters of the Yeung-chun stream, the entrance to a valley rich in natural products, and attractive in scenery. In the mountains that line the river are many wonderful caves, some of which have formed places of refuge for hundreds of people at one time, and some of which are still used as temporary residences. Through this district passes the courier route to Ko-chow, and the lower departments of Canton province.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BAMBOO RIVER.



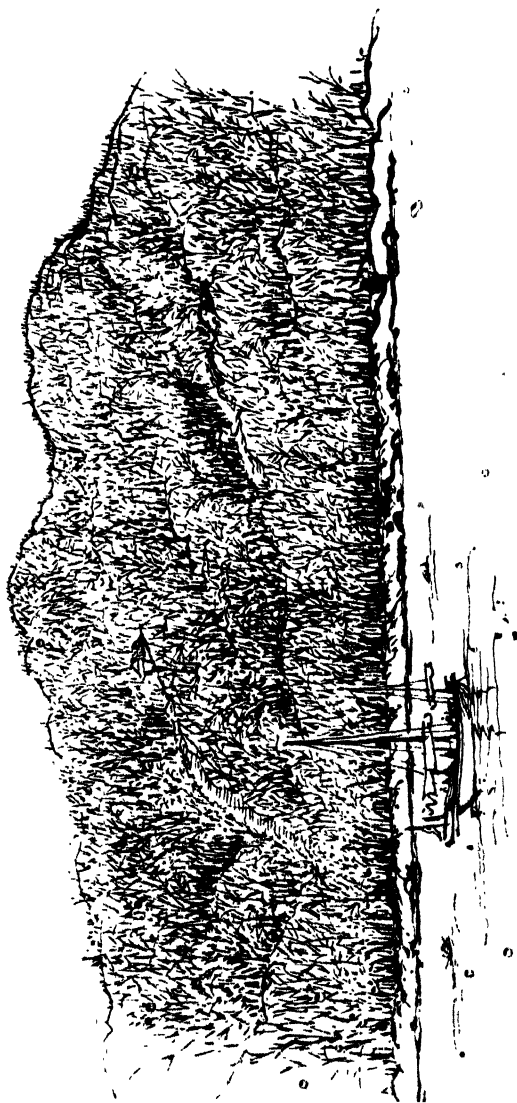
HIS stream is the most southerly branch of the North River, and also its chief tributary. It rises in the north-east corner of the Kwong-si province, and flows south-east for about one hundred and fifty miles through a hilly country, entering the North River about six miles above its junction with the West and Pearl Rivers at Sam-shui. Flowing almost parallel with the Lien-chow River, and some sixty miles farther south, it presents a striking contrast to that stream—not only in itself, but especially in the scenery that lines it. It is called in Chinese the “Sui” or “Fringe River,” from the continuous bamboo groves that line its banks along nearly its whole course. The first section of the stream through the district of Sz-ui is very tame. It winds between high clay banks with barren hills a short distance back on each side, with here and there a clump of trees to relieve the dull sameness. Plantations of the mulberry shrub and fields of the ordinary cereals with plants, in small patches, from which the yellow dyes are produced, take up most of the land.

About twenty-five miles from the mouth of the stream

we come to the city of Sz-ui, which presents a long extent of wall running beside the river. The space enclosed is broad but unattractive, the houses being low and insignificant, and most of them poorly built. Colonies of cranes have appropriated some large trees in the centre of the city, and keep up a croaking kind of conversation, not unpleasant to listen to. The whole of the business quarter is outside the wall to the west and north, where several busy streets extend along a small creek filled with boats, which bring down produce from an extensive valley to the north. A chapel opened by the Baptist Mission is the beginning of good influences among the people, who have hitherto been rather bitter in their opposition to Christianity. A vaccination hospital, with a large sign, reading "Yeung-t'ow-kook," indicates progress in another line. The people are rather rude, and speak with a peculiar and very pronounced rustic accent. The women wear immense bamboo hats, with crowns like cones, that come to a point about six inches high. The Hakka are gradually filling the more hilly parts of the district, and any variation from the local patois in the conversation heard is due to the Hakka dialect.

A very fine variety of orange, known as the Sz-ui-kom, is produced in this district. The smooth, thin, non-adherent rind encloses a juicy pulp of very superior flavour. These oranges are widely sought, and the finest sent as tribute to the emperor.

One mile above Sz-ui, and connected by a good road along the river, lighted at night by a line of lamps placed on posts, is the town of Tsong-kong, a lumber mart, where great rafts of bamboo and pine timber spread out



BAMBOO-COVERED HILLS.

into the stream, and scores of small boats ply in and out among them, detaching and rearranging the floating masses of wood. Much of the timber from the upper stream is here prepared in suitable shape for the large cities below.

Above Sz-ui the hills approach the river, and the long fringe of bamboo begins to appear as we enter the Kwong-ning district. This is the great bamboo-producing district in the province. For nearly one hundred miles the groves extend without a break, not only covering the low lands along the river, but extending up the sides of steep and rocky hills. Nothing but the actual sight can give a proper conception of the vast amount of bamboo cultivated along this stream, or the peculiar charm it gives to the hills, clothed with its graceful plumes, most of them showing a light-green colour in contrast to the darker foliage of the pines that remain scattered here and there among them. The large market town of Shek-kow, "Stone Dog," is at the lower extremity of the bamboo country, and is the chief centre of trade in the Kwong-ning district. Several other market towns are passed as we go up the stream, such as Wong-teen, "Yellow Field," Chun-shui, "Vernal Water," Shek-tan, "Rocky Ford," and Ku-shui, "Water of Mercy," besides a few large villages.

The heavy fringe of bamboo hangs heavily along the river banks, leaving no space for a road, so that when the water is high it is almost impossible for boats to go up. For miles we travel without seeing houses or village, the whole country being so thickly covered with bamboos. Following the narrow paths, however, that wind through

the groves and up the ravines, many villages with their busy people are found. All are at work on bamboo in some form. The multiform uses of this wonderful plant are amazing. Houses may be built with it, the heavier trunks standing as pillars, and making good rafters; the split canes, in broad sheets woven with wattles, form the sides, or, cut into halves, make the floors; the door of the same material, fastened with bamboo thongs, and locked with a peculiar bolt of the same wood; while the roof is composed of bamboo thatch, which is perfectly impervious. The furniture, in the form of stools, chairs, tables, couches, pillows, are all of bamboo, while cups, waterpails, ladles to dip out the rice, and wrappings for cakes of various kinds, are of the same material. The fuel for the clay furnace, and the young sprouts stewing in the pot, are from the same root. The mats to sleep upon, the lattice that forms the windows, the ladder to ascend to the loft, lamps to light the room, and lanterns to hang outside the door, are all of bamboo. Rafts on the river, for fishing or transport, bridges across streams, yokes for cattle, water-pipes four and five inches in diameter, and the long cups placed in circles around the great waterwheels which pour the streams into the field, are from the same plant. Watch-towers in the city, great sheds erected over buildings in course of construction, the framework of theatres, rain-spouts, tent-poles, spear-handles, dry and liquid manures, are all made of this material. Cloth for garments, hats, caps, cuffs, shoes, umbrellas, tobacco-pipes, both stem and bowl, show more of its uses. In many boats the roof is made of bamboo lattice, with leaves of the same plant interlaced. The poles for pushing, the ropes for tracking

and rigging, the mast and oar locks are of bamboo. Window blinds, curtains, brooms, and their handles, brushes, desks, boxes, and frames of all kinds, are made with it. Baskets of all sizes, from the tiny toy, to the great receptacles for grain that will hold a ton or more, baskets for carrying pigs, big and little, for ducks, geese, chickens, all in different shapes, birdcages, cricket traps, snares to entrap partridge and quail, hampers to carry provisions, are made of bamboo; tubs, and the hoops around them, knives, incense sticks, hairpins, combs, hat strings, jugs, teapots, paint-boxes, spoons, and suchlike, are produced. The fisherman finds his raft, his net, his dredge and its long handle, his anchoring post, his floats, and baskets of various shapes, for catching shrimps, fish, crabs, etc., are all of this material. The scholar uses pen, paper, scroll, and tablets, the soldier his spear, arrows, bow, shield, military hat, torch, splints for wounded limbs, shovels and spades for excavation, the magician his divining slips, tallies, and tokens, the gambler his tickets, all of this material; while canes, flutes, cowbells, castanets, silk-worm frames, fans, handles and frames, gates, fences, sieves, scoops, pot-handles, and drying-poles, extend the long catalogue. Pins, tubes, probes, props for fruit trees, carrying-poles, sedan chairs, money-boxes, weaving frames, sofas, trays of all sizes, from two inches to six feet and more in diameter, awnings over streets and before houses, chopsticks, flower-pots, girdles, hedges, books, and various other articles are made from this most useful plant.

Beside the purely utilitarian view of the bamboo there is the artistic and æsthetic side. It has furnished more poetical figures and influenced popular taste to a greater

degree than any other natural object. In every species of ornamentation the bamboo appears. In their painting and in their pottery, in their lacquer work and embroidery, it is perpetually seen. It also plays an important part in the popular beliefs and customs of the people, and is planted in clumps near houses and villages to bring good luck. Its flowers, which are not abundant, have peculiar significance, in some cases being a prophecy of literary distinction to the house or village. About twenty species of bamboo are found indigenous to south China. These vary in size from the little pipe-stem variety, that is scarcely distinguishable from ordinary sedges, to the great Che-tung, or "water-pipe" species, which is sometimes six inches and even more in diameter, and grows to a height of fifty or sixty feet. They vary greatly in colour, from the golden-yellow, to the white-stemmed larger-leaved kind, and again from the deep sea-green, to the black-stemmed variety, so highly prized in commerce. Their leaves also show great variety, some being very small and slender, and others measuring four and five inches in length, and two or more in breadth. Several species yield luscious sprouts that are highly prized for food. With the bamboo for shelter and general use, and rice for food, the Chinese could easily exist.

The charm of the river is peculiar. It is unique in its character, yet shows great variety. Its special attraction is seen in the graceful covering which reaches from the water-edge to the highest hill-tops, and in the clean, leaf-covered paths that run like threads through the endless groves.

Leaving the boat at Koon-po, the usual landing for

officials on their way up the river, we take the road to Kwong-ning, a district city several miles inland. For some distance the bamboos form an impenetrable wall on either side, and as we go back from the river the hills are still covered with groves, but the low plains are given up to rice. A dozen villages are passed before we reach the top of the ridge, which must be crossed before the town is seen. A small pavilion near the summit, with tea and cakes set out, invites the exhausted traveller to rest and refreshment. The descent to the city is rapid, the road still winding amid feathery plumes until a small sandy stream is reached, beyond which lies the town, a straggling, unattractive place. A good paved road, beside which several fine memorial gateways are seen, leads out to Tung-heung, the point of transfer for goods and merchandise on the river. Throngs of men and women carrying salt, rolls of cloth, and other goods, are met. Several villages, in which were some unusually fine houses, indicate a good degree of wealth. Tung-heung is a busy place, crowded into the narrow space between the high bluff and the river. Under a favouring breeze we make good progress up the stream. The report of tigers causes the boatmen to select a safe anchorage for the night, and leads to many words of remonstrance against roaming over the hills in search of plants or attractive spots. A man from the village near by confirms the reports, by the information that a few nights previous a tiger had visited the village and carried off a pig, and that two months before one had come and carried off a cow from the place.

Half-a-day's journey above Tung-heung we come to a

small pass called Tai-hap. The hills on either side come down to the water's edge, projecting in rocky points into the stream. A temple on the bank is visited by the boatmen, and offerings made to secure a safe passage. Above this pass the river winds through thick groves, and on one of its many bends is found the little market town of Ow-tsai, the first we reach in Kwong-si province. Perched on the high bank at the mouth of a small ravine, it is the dirtiest little place along the whole river. Glad to escape from its dark, narrow, miry streets, we return to the boat and sail up the stream. The hills become higher, and show in many places a thick young growth of chestnut, oak, and similar trees. A stream, almost as large as the main one, comes in on the right as we ascend. It flows down from a market region past the market town of Kák-shui, and shows a near way to the town on the upper Lien-chow stream.

As we approach the town of Wai-tsap the hills recede, the bamboos disappear to a great extent, and ordinary fields are seen, while the stream becomes more rapid. The town is rather an insignificant one; much of the space inside the walls is unoccupied, and the public buildings are in a dilapidated condition. A pagoda on the opposite bank, and one some distance down the stream, are important objects in the landscape. A square tower to the east of the city is the most attractive feature in the scene. Half in ruins, it is almost wholly covered by a luxuriant creeper, a species of clematis, which hangs in graceful folds over the crumbling walls, with masses of white flowers gleaming on all sides. Wai-tsap is at the head of navigation for ordinary boats, small craft

being able to ascend twenty miles further to the town of Leung-ch'un. This neighbourhood is famous for partridges, thousands being caught every week in the season and sent to market. The centre of the partridge district is the market-town of Leung-ch'un. From the hamlets in the mountains they are brought in by the farmers who snare them, and are sold for ten cents a pair. Most of them are bought up and sent directly to Canton. Others are found along the streams, and their skins exposed for sale in the streets. Deer, leopards, and other animals are frequently seen on the hills.

Wai-tsap is important as a point of entrance to the Kwong-si province. Its proximity, however, to the district in which the Taiping rebellion arose has fostered and increased the natural antipathy of the people to outside innovations. That the people are not incorrigibly set against foreigners may be seen by contrasting two visits made to the place within the last few years. The first was made by an agent of the American Bible Society, in one of his long tours for Bible distribution. As he approached the city, he found that the officials, aware of his coming, had issued proclamations forbidding the people to have anything to do with him or with those who accompanied him. He was met several miles down the river by a deputation from the district magistrate, requesting him to turn back. He persevered, however; but with the assistance of two native colporteurs, who devoted the whole day to the work, he was able to dispose of but one small book. His boat crew had taken some salt on speculation, which they soon succeeded in disposing of at a price much below its market value in the place. The

man who bought did not realise much profit in his violation of the order published against trafficking with the foreigner or his men. He was arrested, and fined one hundred dollars; his shop was closed by official order, and he so severely beaten in punishment for his offence, that he died a few days after from the effects. This was not a very promising beginning of intercourse with the people of that district. I had long had the purpose in mind to visit the place, and took occasion, a year later, to do so, and was gratified at the change in the spirit and manner of the people. Immediately upon my arrival the magistrate sent a messenger and an escort with a sedan chair for me to visit him in his official residence, and was very cordial in all his offers of assistance and protection. Traces of the former hostility were seen in the conduct of some of the people. I took a supply of books and went through the city, and by persistent friendliness induced them to enter into conversation and listen to my story. Some rough fellows tried to make trouble, and frightened a few of the people by referring to the fate of the man who had bought the salt a year before. The last attempt of this sort was made by a young man, who rushed among the people who had gathered around me and commanded them to disperse. Feeling assured of the friendliness of the people, I confronted him, and steadily asked,

“What do you mean by such conduct?”

Unprepared for such an attitude on my part, he became greatly confused, and said,

“I only told the people it was time for them to eat rice.”

"Oh!" I replied, "you have come to invite these people to eat morning rice with you. I am sure they will all appreciate your kindness very much."

Then turning to the people, I said,

"If this young man so generously invites you to eat his rice, do not hesitate to accept his invitation."

The people burst into a loud laugh at the young man's expense, who went away crestfallen, and throughout the whole day I had no further trouble or annoyance. Four hundred and sixty books and tracts of various sizes were sold.

My crew did not fare so well in their affairs. Contrary to express stipulation, they had secreted a dozen bags of salt, on which they hoped to make a fair profit; but the people, mindful of the bitter experience of the previous year, would have nothing to do with it, not being willing to take it as a gift, so that they were compelled to take it back to a town down the river, and dispose of it at cost price. I was not sorry for them, as they had placed me in the position of one who connived at smuggling.

CHAPTER VII.

ALONG THE NORTH RIVER.



SKIRTING the west side of the North River for fifty miles as we ascend, are seen the mountains that formed the old coast line in the earlier geological history of the country, bare of trees, and in most places covered with heavy masses of wild grass. A little digging on the surface will show deposits of shells and other remains of former ages.

The first town of importance reached on this stream is Lo-pow, which lies about thirty miles above the junction of the three rivers. It is a Customs station, where merchants are subjected to all kinds of petty annoyances in passing their goods. The people groan under the imposition, but are powerless to remedy the evil. Their estimate of its benefits was shown one evening as we walked through the large village of Sz-kong immediately above.

"You come here to do the people good," said an intelligent man who approached us. "Do you wish to know how you can do the most good to this place?"

"We should be very glad to know how we can benefit you," we reply.

"Destroy that Custom House, and drive away the

officials there, and you will do a work for which all the good citizens of this and other places along the river will thank you!"

On a prominent point thirty miles further up stands the Shek-kok pagoda, a striking feature in the landscape. It faces, on the opposite side of the river, the town of the same name, below which, for nearly a mile, stretch the Shek-kok dykes, well known in local history, built at great expense to keep the stream in its proper course. A few years ago the dykes at this place, which had long been neglected, suddenly burst at the time of the spring freshets, causing immense destruction of property. Houses and villages were swept off, people being carried down in boxes, large jars, wardrobes, etc., some of them going fifty miles before they were picked up. Always ready to believe in the marvellous, the Chinese connect the bursting of these dykes with the appearance of a great snake, called the "rice snake," which was supposed to live in some interior cavern of the embankment, and whose burrowing there had weakened the wall. As the water penetrated the aperture made by the snake, it appeared on the surface, to the great consternation of the people, who believed disaster would follow. These dykes, as now rebuilt, are a fine piece of work, and should stand for ages.

As we ascend the stream, the Tsing-uen mountains rise in ridges one above the other. Some are covered with tea plantations, others are barren, or clothed only with jungle, in the midst of which tigers make their home. It is a frequent sight in Canton to see men from Tsing-uen with tiger-skins and bones for sale. They hunt them on

these mountains, and have repeatedly expressed the desire that some of the riflemen in Hong-kong should join them in their sport. Near the Tsing-uen pagoda, which forms an exception to the general rule in being built upon low land, a small stream, flowing down from these mountains, enters the river. It comes through a rough, mountainous country, and its rapid current is only made navigable for small craft by frequent dams. Between high hills it flows, with several market towns, to concentrate the meagre business of the district. The town of Pak-shek-tam marks the limit of travel by its little boats, whence a day's journey over a mountain pass, amidst magnificent scenery, brings the traveller to the Lien-chow stream, a few miles below Yeung-shan. The mail and Government couriers follow the line of this stream in going to Lien-chow.

The city of Tsing-uen, which stretches for a mile or more along the river, is one of much importance. It is famous for its sugar, its rice, and its flies. The Baptists have a mission there, the little church gathered having firmly withstood the shock of persecution to which, in all its severity, it was exposed during the past year. One night a company of evil men had planned to attack the chapel, in which they supposed there was but one man living alone to keep the place. As they approached, they heard him talking, as they thought, very earnestly to some one, and concluding he was not alone they thought it best to return. He was praying.

Ten miles above Tsing-uen we come to one of the finest bits of scenery to be found anywhere. Through the midst of a mountain group, rent asunder by some

mighty convulsion, the river flows in a deep, narrow course. Approaching the place from the south, the "Seven Star" hills are first passed, then the rising cliffs on either side, and soon we are between the lofty walls of a magnificent mountain gorge. Fleets of small fishing-boats lie off the little town of Pak-min, and not infrequently craft of another kind, in which bands of robbers dart out in the darkness and pounce upon boats in the narrow gorge where no help is near. The narrow defile is six miles long, and is in the form of a semi-circle. The hills at either end are mostly bare, but in the middle section, on both sides of the river, they are well covered with trees.

On the north side a series of Buddhist monasteries rise one above another in the midst of a splendid thickly-wooded ravine. One cannot but admire the taste of the Buddhist recluses who select the most charming spots for their retreats.

"Midst fairest mountain scenes,
Where Nature's skilful hand
Has woven leafy screens,
Their shrines and cloisters stand."

The groves of Fi-loy-tsz are a never-ceasing delight, and are well known throughout the province. The picturesque glen, down which the cascade leaps, the pool at its foot, where the children delight to play, the cool, sweet water praised by every visitor, the deep groves and shady paths leading to the upper heights, the cool retreats, with mossy seats, and quiet nooks where tired nerves may rest undisturbed, the wealth of flowering plants that cover the hills with their mantle of brilliant

colours, the abundance of delicate ferns, and many other attractions, combine to make it a place which all who have known its charms long to revisit; a place not merely to alight at for a moment in our hurried flight, as the legend represents the Buddha to have done, but one to linger in amidst its rocks and trees in the full enjoyment of its manifold delights. Prominent among the floral attractions of this place are two fine species of rhododendron, unknown to the botanical world, until specimens were collected by the writer and handed to Dr. Hance, the great authority on botany in China, for description, who has given them a place in their appropriate family, under the names of *R. Henryi* and *R. Mariae*. The former was found in luxuriant bloom on the hills above the monastery, the whole mountain side aglow with its rich lavender hues, and fragrant with its sweet perfume. On shrubs from ten to twelve feet high hung the gorgeous clusters of this most beautiful flower. A year later the second species was found growing almost side by side with the other, but being a few days later in blooming, was not discovered the previous year. In describing this plant in the *Journal of Botany*, Dr. Hance says: "I had the pleasure of describing in the pages of this Journal last year a very fine species of rhododendron, discovered in Kwong-tung province by Rev. B. C. H——. Lately Mr. H—— again visited the locality, and was successful in procuring several vigorous living specimens of this desirable shrub, which I have little doubt will soon be in cultivation in Europe. He was still more fortunate in detecting another extremely beautiful species, also undescribed, of which he brought

back living branches in full flower. . . . I have dedicated it to Mr. H——'s amiable and accomplished wife, the frequent companion of his journeys into the interior, who on these occasions has the charge and preparation, *ex officio*, of the botanical collections, a task for which the excellently dried specimens prove her to have been specially designed by natural selection."

Beyond Fi-lo-y the face of the country changes. Hills and mountains take up most of the space, leaving only narrow plains along the river, or small valleys inland, for the cultivation of rice. Bamboo groves along the bank, and a sparse growth of pines and cedars on the hills, add to the attractions of the scenes through which we pass. The rocks in many places assume peculiar shapes, one in particular, to which, our attention is called, being in the form of a huge drum resting on the top of the hill, placed there, as the natives believe, for the use of supernatural beings. Just beyond this "Stone Drum" the rocky barriers come down to the water's edge, and form the gorge known as the "Great Temple Pass." Its jagged sides project into the river, making it a difficult point for the boats to pass. From the top of the jutting cliff that rises abruptly from the water, a fine stretch of hill country, with the river winding through the midst, extends to the north and to the south. A few miles above this point the stream is again confined to a narrow channel by the walls of "Censer Pass;" the broad sheet of the water above, enclosed in a shape somewhat resembling a censer, gives name to this gorge, which has no very striking features to mark it.

At the foot of the "Blind Boy's Pass" we come to the

entrance to the Lien-chow stream, which flows down through a charming country for one hundred and twenty miles. We reserve for succeeding chapters the description of this river of wondrous beauty, and enter at once the narrow defile before us. When the earlier expeditions from the north crossed the ridge and made their descent upon the broad plains of the south, in the second century before our era, a stockade city, with ten thousand troops, was built at this point to guard the narrow pass, which formed the only way of access to the districts concerned. This gorge in the hills is ten miles long, the hills on either side rising to a height of over two thousand feet. In the upper and lower sections the hills are bold, rocky, picturesque, rising almost perpendicularly from the water, but in the middle section they are rather tame, being smooth and grass-covered, and retreating more gradually from the river. Native taste and imagination have given names to the various rock formations, which are pointed out as we pass slowly up the gorge. There is the "Stone General," in a prominent position near the top of the cliff, to preside over the place. There is the "Lonely One," an isolated, needle-shaped pinnacle some twenty feet square that stands out conspicuously. All eyes are strained to trace the outlines of the Blind Boy, which in certain positions are seen with great distinctness on the face of a perpendicular wall of rock about one hundred and fifty feet above the water. The form, the features, and the appearance of the eyes, are striking when seen at the proper angle. The "Stone Coffin," the "Rock of Genii," and many other resemblances more or less fanciful are remarked, and finally, as we emerge from

the pass on the north, and turn to take a last look, a magnificent eagle of enormous proportions, with outstretched wings, its head in the attitude of listening, appears on the mountains to the east. It is a striking likeness, but must be seen from a particular point to reveal the exact picture.

Above the Blind Boy's Pass we enter a limestone region, where cliffs of most varied and striking shapes appear on either hand. A new and richly variegated vegetation is seen, and remarkable caves in the rocks add to the charm of novelty. From the natives we hear of wonderful caverns in some of the hills to the inland, as yet but partially explored. And marvellous stories are told of the experience of daring spirits who have attempted the task; of hidden treasures guarded by unseen spirits; of maidens changed to fairies as they entered these mysterious chambers; of secret granaries, which in time of famine pour forth, through crevices of the rock, supplies of grain for the starving people.

We can give but a hasty glance at the many attractive cliffs as we direct our steps toward the famous Pik-lok Tunnel, three miles back from the west bank of the stream. Beyond the bamboo groves that line the river, and the rice plain that intervenes with its little villages and houses closely packed together, over the rolling pasture land, where flocks of white goats and small cattle are feeding, we come to a remarkable natural bridge joining the rugged limestone cliffs. A perpendicular wall of whitish rock, five hundred feet high, glistens in the sun as we approach, at the base of which is the tunnel, about fifty feet wide and thirty in height at the eastern

entrance, but descending toward the west until, on the opposite side, it is but fifteen feet high. It is about one hundred yards in extent, with a brook of clear water flowing through it. A dam at the eastern end forms a pool, in which are fish darting back and forth, one of which, of unusual size, is pointed out as a "fairy fish," which no one is able to catch by hook, net, or basket. The road into the country beyond passes through this tunnel. The walls are covered with inscriptions, and to the right of the wide entrance is a little temple with a cave behind it. On the banks adjoining grow many flowers of a bright yellow hue, but unsavoury odour, which proved to be a new species here discovered for the first time, and described as *Gomphostemma insuave*.

Following the course of the little stream that flows out from the tunnel, we pass extensive limestone quarries, skirt the base of several fine cliffs that rise up from the river's side, and come into the open country again below the city of Ying-tak. This city is finely situated with high hills behind it, on which are many temples, while in front are broad plains, with limestone hills rising from them. On one of these below the city is a peculiar conical tower, specially constructed to bring good luck. Ying-tak has many interesting historical associations. For many years it was the seat of Government for this section of the province, and also the headquarters of the Buddhists in past centuries. The Golden Dragon monastery is still in existence. The grave of Low-chung, a famous character, cousin or brother of the usurper Low-im, who set up the unrecognised dynasty of Nan-han in the confusion that ensued upon the fall of the

Tang dynasty, is said to be on Lion Hill, near the present monastery of the White Tiger. In the local chronicles we find many records of striking occurrences. In 1532 a flood, which rose a hundred feet and desolated the country occurred; in 1780 the place was shaken by an earthquake, accompanied by a noise like thunder; and in 1840 a similar occurrence is reported; in 1817, and again in 1829, the district was visited by terrific hailstorms; the stones that fell are described as being of the size of rice bowls, and doing immense damage; in 1833 snow fell to the depth of over a foot; and in 1834 there were fifteen floods in the course of the year; while in 1871 and 1872 the country was devastated by floods and landslides.

Opposite Ying-tak, a stream that comes down from the hill of Yung-uen enters the North River. It is shallow and full of rapids, and is navigated by small, wedge-shaped boats, so constructed as to be able to shoot the rapids with ease. Only a few miles up the stream is a tremendous cataract, down which the water pours at an angle of forty-five degrees. Chinese passengers always alight and walk around the place, but the only white man who has ever passed that way kept his seat in the boat, enjoying the exhilarating sensation of flying down the inclined plane of water. Yung-uen is famous for its plums, which are of a very superior quality, for its minerals, especially sulphate of copper, and for its tigers, which sometimes decimate the population, and which, in the year 1868, are said to have destroyed between thirty and forty people in the district. The Yung-uen stream is sometimes called the Tung-shui, or sulphate of copper stream, and also the Tung-shui, or copper river. As early

as the fifth century the discovery was made that by putting iron into the water of this stream it would, as the record states, become copper, and leave a salt behind, that is, sulphate of copper. It is only at certain points that the water is of this strongly mineral quality.

Above Ying-tak the river flows between high banks, with large fields of rice and sugar-cane along its course. After passing "Cat's Ear" rock, which juts out of the water in a manner to suggest its name, and the village of Kong-wa, we come to Mong-fu-kong, which, as well as Ying-tak, is a station of the Wesleyan Mission. At the back of this town rises a peculiar hill, on the top of which is, a lake in what is supposed to be the crater of an extinct volcano. As the river winds in its course, a pleasant variation in travel may be had by walking across the country and meeting the boat again at the cliffs of the Goddess of Mercy. Over an attractive rolling country, past the Lion Hill, a peculiar rocky cliff, and the "Pencil Rock" peaks, the path leads us, until we reach the ferry, landing opposite the striking cliffs in which are found the caves of the Goddess of Mercy. Straight from the water's edge, which flows in a deep current at this point, to a height of six hundred feet, rises a perpendicular wall of rock. It is pierced by innumerable small cavities in which the birds find homes, and shows straggling shrubs that have taken root in the handfuls of soil on the ledges. The whole is a mass of igneous rock, of white, grey, reddish, and yellow colour in various parts, which shows no effect of atmospheric changes. The ferry boat lands us at the mouth of the cave, which is in several chambers, whence we ascend a

winding staircase, with idols on every side, to the main cavern, which is devoted to the deity whose name it bears. Standing on the balcony of the temple built at the opening of this cavern a hundred feet above the water, we look down at the stream below, and out over the country around. The place was dedicated to Kwan-yin, and proclaimed a sacred spot by the Emperor Shunchi, who sent deputies with presents of a banner and other paraphernalia, and performed worship by proxy at the shrine. A large gilt image stands upon the main altar, dressed in embroidered robes, the gift of devotees. It has acquired the reputation of being a lucky shrine, and has received an enormous amount of worship in the past. Imperial patronage has fallen off, so that in these later times it is comparatively deserted. Its principal supporters are the merchants, who in transporting their goods seek the protection of this benign goddess. The natural beauty of the cave has been marred by the smoke and debris of incense and tapers, so that except in the remote chambers, difficult to reach, but few of its original attractions appear.

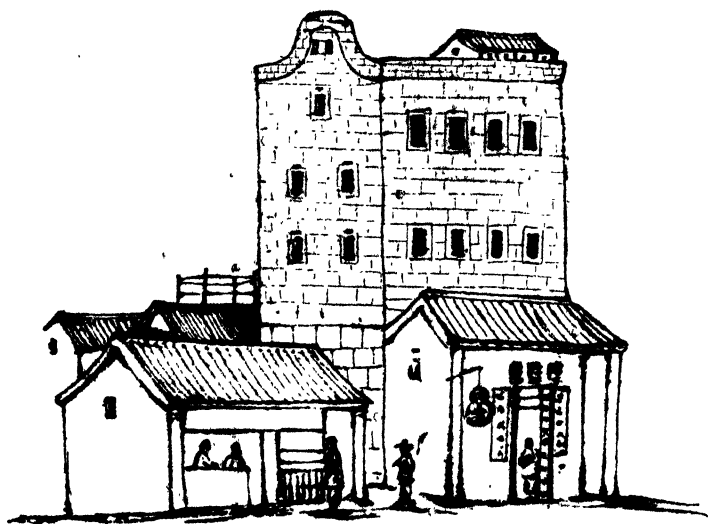
About thirty miles further up the river is another remarkable cliff of similar formation, called Tan-tsz-ki, "Cannon-ball Barrier." The rocky wall rises in a sheer precipice eight hundred feet. The face of this great wall is filled with small caverns, in which great numbers of birds have built their nests. Bright little birds of fair plumage, and stately ospreys, and great eagles, seek homes in its inaccessible sides. As we passed it in the fading light of evening, when the purple tints that come with the setting sun were covering all the hills around,

we beheld a company of ospreys soaring majestically, wheeling and screaming above its summit. Along the opposite shore were well-wooded hills, while the banks were adorned with sedges of great height, whose feathery plumes waved gracefully before the wind.

Above this point we come to the town of Pak-to, near which are rocky hills along the river, which give back remarkable echoes. We reach here the entrance of the Ue-uen stream, which comes down in its turbulent course from a mountainous district. The chief town on its banks is Lung-kwai, and the main products are timber, bamboo, and corn. In the hills along its course are found several tribes of the aboriginal Mius. Chinese accounts give the number as eighty families, most of whom have the surname Poop. Their language is unintelligible to the Chinese, who say it sounds like the chattering of birds. They wear clothes of a peculiar pattern, and dress their hair once a month with oil and wax. At night they sleep with their heads resting on high pillows. The wilder portion of this race maintain their original characteristics, but those who have come under Chinese influence are more civilised, and cultivate the hills and valleys. Their women have earrings of a peculiar shape, and wear long gowns that reach down to their feet, and are secured without buttons. The men also bore their ears for rings. Both men and women wear embroidered garments. In marriage they do not regard surnames. In their girdles they carry knives and bows for use against tigers and wolves, and they eat the flesh of wild animals. They make whisky out of corn, and on the fifteenth of the seventh month (about

Ling-Nam.

the middle of August) worship their great ancestor, the ancient Dog King. Their youths and maidens dress in gay clothing, and delight in music and dancing. Once a year their chief comes out to see the district magistrate, and report to him the number of the people, and any facts of importance pertaining to their relation to the Chinese.



A PAWNSHOP.

After traversing another twenty miles, we come in sight of the city of Shiu-kwan, the centre of trade and of government in the northern section of the province. It has a population of 100,000 people, the city proper being surrounded by a substantial wall, the eastern suburbs, in which the greater part of the business is done, extending for a mile or more along the river. It is most

favourably situated at the junction of two important streams, and is the political and literary centre of six large counties. Two important custom stations, one on the North and the other on the Ching River, each with a bridge of boats spanning the stream, provide for the collection of duties. The shores of both rivers are lined with boats, which represent a large and varied traffic, while miles of rafts indicate the extent of the lumber trade. The name Shiu-kwan means "City of Harmony," and the tradition is that the great Emperor Shun, in his travels south over four thousand years ago, visited this region, and played his wonderful music, celebrated in all the ancient literature of China, upon the musical stones to the north, and also on the site of the present city, whose name commemorates his visit.

The importance of Shiu-kwan as a centre for mission work has been appreciated by the English Wesleyans, who have now a flourishing work in operation there, and, what is not always the case in such enterprises, they have secured the goodwill of the officials and gentry, with whom they are on terms of cordial friendship. As the guest of Rev. G. Hargreaves, I had an opportunity of seeing the respect and friendliness shown him by those in high position. We exchanged calls with Mr. Hue, one of the leading gentry, and were received by him with every polite attention. He is an elderly man of much intelligence, has held high official positions, his last post being that of Prefect of Kiu-kiang, in Kiang-si. His house is surrounded by ornamental grounds, in which may be seen a fine display of flowers. His great desire, when I saw him, was to secure a *Victoria*

regia to add to his collection of rare plants. He was still affected by many of the superstitions of his people. He was a firm believer in Luk-tso, the great deity of Nam-wa, and was much concerned by the peculiar redness of the sky, seen at that time for several days. Another man of the same name, but younger, who is largely concerned in the salt and coal business, is a man of progressive ideas, and comes to Mr. Hargreave's regularly for the translation of special articles in the *Scientific American* and other scientific magazines.

According to the theory of Chinese geomancy, Shiu-kwan is favourably located in relation to the surrounding hills. To the south-west, across the North River, rises Fu-yung (Hibiscus) Hill, which, it is said, was formerly covered with a rich growth of hibiscus shrubs, from which a certain famous herbalist, who afterwards attained immortality, distilled life-giving elixirs, and prepared pills of marvellous efficacy. Half-way up the hill is a stone-house, and on the top, a well, called the "Jade Well," from the greenish colour of its water. The clay from this well is considered to be a specific for children when afflicted with boils, and is much sought after for this reason. In this well, which the natives say is now dry, the water coming out half-way down the hill, the shells of the pills made by the "fairy" doctor remain. They are said to be of a reddish colour, not perfectly round, and about the size of pigeon eggs, made of something like a mixture of stone and iron. Two miles north of the city is Yuk-shan, "Jade Hill," from which it is said jade-stone was formerly obtained, and to the north-east are certain rocks, called the "Leaping

Stones," which are said to have come from Kwai-lam, a city two or three hundred miles distant, in the next province, in a thunderstorm. When the people saw them coming they exclaimed, "Ha! Can stones leap?"

Shiu-kwan, and the district surrounding, besides being favoured by natural beauties of great attractiveness, is also a productive region. Among the products of the land are rice of a high grade, barley, several kinds of wheat, beans, peas, and hempseed. Several varieties of maize, described as dog-tail maize, dog-claw maize, and duck-claw maize, beside the ordinary Indian corn, are found. Taro, sweet potatoes, which the chronicle of the district says came from Spain, a kind of hill potatoes, sometimes called "bamboo" potatoes (probably yams), and cotton called kat-pui, also said to have come from Spain, are cultivated. Hemp cloth is made, also sackcloth, and a peculiar kind of banana cloth woven from the fibres of banana leaves and stalks. They make four kinds of wine or whisky, and, in essential oils, produce tea oil, pepper oil, pea-nut oil, salad oil, and wood oil from the seeds of the *Aleurites vernicia*. Cane-sugar, barley-sugar, and honey are made, and four varieties of tea grown. Among the metals gold is found in small quantities in Ying-tak district; silver in several places, also copper, zinc, iron, and lead; quartz, lime, sulphur, glass material, sulphate of copper, sulphate of iron, alum, and a very fine quality of clay for pottery called Kuk-nai, literally "yeast" clay. Coal in abundance is found, and mined to a limited extent.

Among the vegetables they have seventeen kinds of

bamboo that produce edible sprouts; more than a dozen kinds of melons and squashes, lotus roots, water caltrops, water chestnuts, and other more common productions. Among the fruits we find plums, the best in the province, first cultivated by the priests at Nam-wa, peaches, pomegranates, jujubes, oranges, citrons, rose-apples, bananas, whampes, lichees, longugans, arbutus, pears, lo-kwats, (Chinese medlar), and pomelons. The rich variety of bamboos is seen in the following list, given according to their native designation: "hairy," "yellow," "purple," "variegated," "red" (the kind from which cloth was made, the Chinese and Aborigines using this cloth for garments as late as the ninth and tenth centuries), "ivory," "sweet," "hemp," "silken," "square," "oily," "thorny," "big thorn," "big-head," "crooked joint," and a dozen others. Among the trees are those on which the wax insects are nourished—oaks, chestnuts, castanopsis, liquid-amber, pine, cunninghamia, camphor, tallow-tree, etc.

The domestic animals found are cows of two kinds, horses in small numbers, sheep and goats, also pigs, dogs, and cats, with ducks, geese, and other fowls. Among the birds are pigeons, doves, cormorants, pheasants, thrushes, larks, partridges, francolin, minahs, quail, kingfishers, eagles, owls, blackbirds, and crows innumerable. Wild animals are also plentiful. Deer abound, and are highly prized. They shed their horns in June, and as the new ones appear they are caught, the young, tender horns being worth their weight in gold as medicine. There are several kinds of large deer, also antelopes and gazelles, wild dogs and jackals are found, wild boar, porcupine,

the civet or fruit fox, which climbs trees and devours the fruit, the cat fox, the hundred-footed fox, the opossum, said by the Chinese to have power to change its sex, a cat which has a musk pouch, and is sometimes called the "spirit cat," and monkeys, of which one hundred are sometimes seen in a band, tigers, leopards, sea-dogs, that live in holes, and whose bark is said to be very unlucky, hares, armadilloes, and hairy tortoises are specimens of the fauna.

The district also seems to be a healthy one if the chronicles of the place can be trusted, which state that within a comparatively short time twenty people were recorded as having reached the age of one hundred, and nearly one thousand who had lived to be over ninety, while the instances in which five or six generations were found living under one roof, and had received imperial recognition, in the form of memorial gateways erected to commemorate such events, were found to be more than one hundred.

The local history abounds in records of remarkable events. About the year 715 A.D. myriads of rats appeared and destroyed the harvests. In 1533 ice formed a foot thick in the streams, killing the fish and destroying the trees on the land. Two years later the great sea-serpent, or dragon of the morasses, was seen in Yung-uen. In 1635, and again in 1657 and 1663, snow fell for several days in succession, reaching a depth of two feet. In 1639 a pig was born with a lion's head and a red horn, and famine followed during the year. The years 1661, 1784, and 1793 were marked by tiger scourges in Yan-fa, scores of people being carried off. In some places the tigers were

caught in nets and destroyed. In September of 1841, just at dark, there appeared in the sky something fiery red, with a head in the shape of a large sieve, and a tail seventy feet long. It passed from north to south, and disappeared with a succession of several severe explosions resembling heavy thunder. It was probably a meteor. In 1859 and 1862 comets were seen in the north-west. Several earthquakes are recorded, and some frightful hailstorms; one in 1873, in which the stones, described as being as large as rice bowls, broke roofs and damaged crops to an alarming extent. In 1673 small-pox carried off thousands of people, and in 1821 a plague of virulent form desolated several counties.

As we ascend the North River above Shiu-kwán navigation is much impeded by rapids. About midway between this city and Lok-cheung we come to the Yeung-kai stream, which flows out from a valley of unusual attraction. Leaving the open country the traveller is soon in the midst of a magnificent gorge, where the high walls almost shut out the sun. The lofty mountains, clothed in many places with rich vegetation, the solitary stream, murmuring as it flows down, the cool shadows and great variety of plants which the fertile loam and moist atmosphere produce, form most impressive surroundings. Boats cannot ascend the stream, and the footpath along its course is often precarious. No accommodation for the night can be found, so that beyond a day's excursion nothing has yet been done to explore this valley. It promises rich returns to the lover of nature, and will not only reward him with inspiring mountain scenes, but in the beauties of its floral treasures will delight his heart, and if he be a practical

botanist, provide him with many interesting specimens as yet unknown and undescribed.

On the eastern side, several miles back from the river, and about thirty miles north of Shiu-kwán, is a collection of wonderful stones, called the "Shiu-shek," "Musical Stones." They are thirty-six in number, in various shapes and positions, some standing like gate-posts, others with peculiar perforations. The old records say that the great Emperor Shun, in his reputed journey to the south, discovered their peculiar character, and played his wonderful music on them, and that fairies may sometimes be seen in flowing dress walking among them, and causing them to give forth peculiar music. In the history of Shiu-kwán are given pictures of these thirty-six stones, with the name and a short account of each.

On the north border of the province stands the city of Lok-cheung, whose well-built wall shows conspicuously as we pass up the river. Immediately below the city Kwai-fung, or "Tortoise Peak," projects into the stream, and forms a natural fortification. In the year 1865, when snow fell to a great depth on the hills around, and the rice was greatly injured, and when the bamboos blossomed extensively and famine followed in Lok-cheung, at the foot of this peak, so the story runs, an iron chain fell into the river. It was not much larger than a cup, but so heavy that the people could not lift it, and after remaining in sight three days it sank from view; drought and famine followed. In the neighbouring hills are some remarkable caves, in one of which, three miles to the east, one thousand men once took refuge; another, which

is sometimes called the Cave of the Genii, is held in reverence as the place where Luk-tso, the sixth Buddhist patriarch, stayed on his way south, and where he slept on a stone couch. This cave, which is said to have a room thirty feet wide by fifty feet long and three hundred feet high, with natural rocks in the form of various articles of furniture, is placed by some among the seventy-two "happy spots" of the Taoists.

A few miles above Lok-cheung we enter the great pass which stretches through nearly the whole course of the stream to the town of Ping-shek, thirty miles distant, in the province of Hunan. This stream is called the Mo-shui, "Military Stream," and in olden times was much feared because of its deep gorges and heavy forests. It was said that a bird would not dare to fly across the chasm, and that a beast would not drink its water, which, as it poured down through the dark depths, they thought must be poisonous. The tall, dense forests, the narrow passage, and foaming rapids, have all found place in the writings and poetry of native travellers. Three days are required to make the ascent of thirty miles, which shows one succession of rapids and cataracts. About one-third of the way up a smaller stream comes in from the north through a great cañon, the sheer walls of which show no path on either side. On the shore in a bark hut dwells a fortune-teller, whose reputation brings people from distant places to consult him. The hills which line the gorge rise three or four thousand feet, and are covered with heavy timber, and among them are hundreds of men cutting and preparing the logs for market. A delightful combination of all the varied charms of lofty

mountains, of rushing cataracts, of wooded hills and rich vegetation; of the grand, the awful, and the inspiring; of the thrilling, the exhilarating, and wonder-exciting, is found in this great pass, which is unsurpassed by any in the province, and by but few scenes in the world.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GORGES OF THE LIEN-CHOW RIVER.



AS we enter the narrow stream, of the Lien-chow River, which flows out between bulwarks of mighty hills on either side, we soon find ourselves hemmed in by mountains that come down to the water's edge ; not continuous chains, but rounded hills and peaks, with valleys and ravines intervening, down which flow brooks of clear and sparkling water. These hills are fairly covered with a young growth of pine and other trees. At the foot of nearly every hill, and at the mouth of every little stream, are anchored large wood-boats, which, during the dry season especially, gather their cargoes of firewood for transportation to the south. The river winds continuously, and reveals itself only in short sections. Each turn in its course introduces some new object of interest, and throws fresh light on those already seen. As we pass along, the foot of some steep, pine-clad hill on the one side, before us, on the opposite bank, stretches a rich grove of graceful bamboos, whose glistening stems and verdant plumes present a picture one never ceases to admire. A walk through such a grove, with the ground softly carpeted

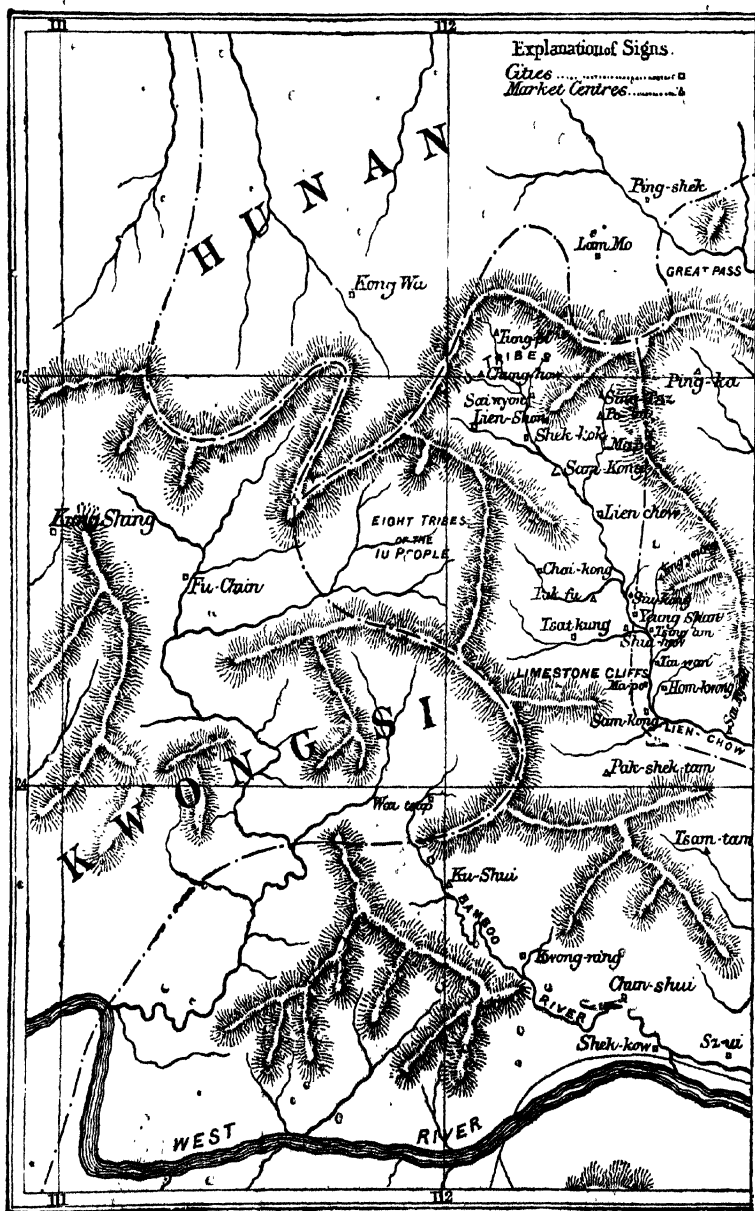
with the delicate leaves, is a real solace after a hot and tiresome day.

About two miles from the mouth of the river we find a very small stream coming in from the south, and following its course between the hills for nearly half a mile, we come to the "Three Wells Fall," where the stream, broad and shallow above, gathers its waters into a narrower space, and falls about fifteen feet into three circular bowls or wells which it has worn for itself in the black rock beneath. Impatient of restraint, it boils and foams, lashing the smooth sides of the narrow enclosures, until it escapes into the transparent pool a few feet below, from which, after pausing a moment to recover its strength, it starts again on its musical journey down to the river.

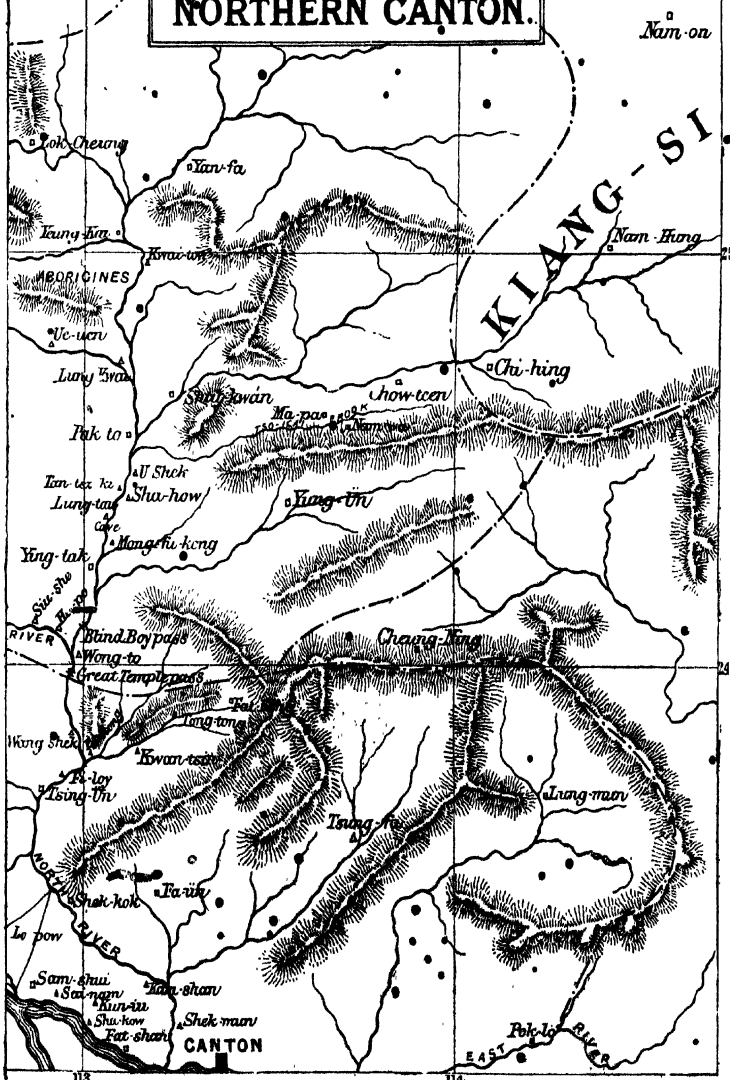
Another mile up the river brings us to the market town of Ha-po, which is reached by a narrow foot-bridge over a small stream to the east, and is walled in by a fine grove of bamboos to the north and west. For some distance beyond this the river flows between hills of red clay soil, which are streaked with the marks of numerous land slides, and are covered more or less thickly with trees and shrubs. Some of them have patches of cultivated land extending to their very tops, from which a meagre crop of maize or pea-nuts rewards the toil of the husbandman. Numerous lime-kilns appear in the groves along the banks, and here and there small stretches of level land are carefully prepared for the cultivation of rice. Passing several insignificant hamlets, we come, after five miles' travel, to Siu-she market, which is distinguished by a grove of tall pines that rise behind the

village. Two miles beyond this, a stream of some importance, called Wong-chai-shui, flows in from the south-west. Its length is about forty miles, and scores of little light draft boats bring down wood and produce from the hill country through which it passes. Three market towns on its banks afford centres of trade for the people; and a monastery on a picturesque hill near Shui-pin, the first of these markets, supplies the religious element. The people in this valley are all Puntis. The dress of the well-to-do women, of whom I saw a number, is somewhat like that of the Tartar women in Canton. The upper jacket is long, reaching nearly to the feet. Their feet, while bound, are not compressed into such a painfully small size as is usual in the southern districts, and not to such an extent as to interfere with their walking.

Leaving this stream, we are soon in sight of the first group of limestone hills, which rise black and craggy, in bold contrast to the smooth, undulating hills of a softer formation near by. One huge cliff partly overhangs the water, and beneath its projecting side, just above the surface of the water, is a peculiar formation, in which we vainly look for a resemblance to an "inverted bonze," which is the name it has received from the natives. On one side of the cliff is an extensive limestone quarry, and the gleam of the freshly-detached limestone flashes out among the shrubs and bushes. At this point the river makes a long *détour*, while the footpath crosses a depression in the hills, and shortens the journey by several miles. Both routes are full of interest. We take that by the river first, and leaving the jagged, pointed



MAP OF NORTHERN CANTON.



peaks of the limestone cliffs, are soon among the smooth rounded hills again as we enter the Pak-yeung-shui Pass. At the foot of this pass we come to the first of the many rapids that are the most serious obstacle in the way of travel up this river. The pass we enter is about five miles long, and is in the form of a semicircle. Its beauty is of a quiet shade; no rocky cliffs, no sombre forests, but smooth grass-clad hills, over which the shadows of the passing clouds chase each other, and a dreamy feeling of forgetfulness steals upon us as we watch them. Over the brow and down the precipitous side of every hill facing the river is a deep and well-worn track, down which the bundles of wild mountain grass are shot, to be gathered below and carefully stowed away for fuel.

On the southern side of the pass the arc of the semicircle is scarcely broken; but on the northern side it is divided into equal segments by a stream of clear and limpid water, whose existence is unsuspected until we come directly abreast of it, the reason for this being that a low hill lies almost immediately in front of the opening in the hills through which it flows, shutting out the view of it from the east and south. It is a beautiful stream, deep and cool, with numerous rocks rising in its bed. As we follow its course through the notch in the hills, we find it flows through a picturesque valley broadly open to the north, but walled in on the east and west by rocky cliffs of igneous formation, and running to a sharp point at its southern extremity. In this valley are five or six villages, and the small market town of Chuk-t'in, where an interchange of commodities

among the people is accomplished once in every five days. At the head of the pass another set of rapids detains the traveller, and allows him time to examine a temple in the midst of a grove of trees on the northern bank before he makes his entrance into the broad and fertile plain of Sai-ngau-tam, in the centre of which is a market town of the same name, at which the foot-path referred to above comes down to the river again.

We go back to where this path leaves the river on the other side of the hills, and follow it up the mountain. In a short time we are in an amphitheatre of hills, with perpendicular peaks on all sides, rocky, jagged, full of rifts and crevices, and covered with verdure wherever a handful of soil affords sufficient hold for the roots. We ascend several hundred feet before we reach the pass in the hills, beyond which the road begins to descend. From this picturesque pass, flanked on either side by piled-up masses of rock of all shapes and dimensions, we look out upon the plain of Sai-ngau, which is in shape like a round basin about six miles in diameter, encircled on all sides by hills. It is a charming picture, the whole plain being under cultivation, the fields of rice, sugar-cane, pea-nuts, etc., yielding a fair increase. Villages with their leafy fringes of evergreen hiding the squalor and unsightliness as with a mantle of charity, dot the plain in all directions. The river makes an extensive sweep through it. Entering from the north, it flows first south, then east, and turning to the north again, departs through the pass just described. The plain is peopled by an enterprising colony of Hakkas. The stockade villages, forts, and barricades in the mountains bear witness to their

struggles in the past, while the decay and disuse of these means of defence point to the peace and quiet that has come to them in these later years. The people are civil and even polite to the stranger. They listen with evident interest to the preaching of the missionary, and buy Christian books with great readiness.

Descending from the pass the road leads us along the base of some wonderful hills that rise abruptly to a height of several hundred feet, the whole sides of some of them being covered with a tangled mass of vines and shrubs, with ferns of rare beauty hanging gracefully from the crevices. Turning into a side path that leads up a depression in the hillside, from which a mountain brook tumbles, we find a fort still kept in good repair. A precipitous wall of rock on one side and a broad ditch on the other make it comparatively secure. Its white walls render it a conspicuous object for a long distance, and give it the appearance of a temple rather than a fort. A short distance beyond this fort, on the main path, we come to an opening in the hills from which a small brook issues. Entering the valley that extends to the south-east at this point, we soon come to the "Clear Cloud Cave," which opens on the southern side of the hill, and extends nearly one hundred yards into the solid rock of which the hill is composed. Whatever charms it may once have possessed have been obscured by the smoke and debris of idolatrous worship. The people evidently regard the cave with superstitious reverence; for on each of the two occasions when I visited it, we had scarcely reached the place before a crowd of people, warned of our approach by some one on the look-out, had gathered, and

were performing their genuflections, offering incense, and sounding the bell and drum, evidently with the design of putting their patron deities on the alert to counteract any evil schemes we might have on foot. There are several smaller caves in the adjacent hills, and report places a large one in this vicinity, but its exact location is a matter of doubt. There are remains of ancient mining operations made in search of precious metals in these hills, and the people declare them to be stored with rich treasures, which fear of disturbing the geomantic equilibrium prevents them from making any effort to secure.

After traversing this plain by boat or on foot, we come to the "Seven Li" Pass, which lies directly north and south. Its name indicates its length, and the deep, placid water flows through it with scarcely a ripple on its surface, until its stream divides a short distance below, at the head of a small island, and falls noisily over the pebbly descent of some rapids. The walls of this pass are composed of mound-like hills, without trees or shrubs, brown and barren in the autumn and winter, but beautifully green in spring and summer, when they look like great emerald cushions, soft and inviting.

Emerging from this pass, we enter another broad plain which centres around the large town of Hom-kwong, whose towers appear in sight soon after we pass the little market village of U-tsui. As the boat comes opposite the town, we find further progress barred by a bridge of boats, chained together and stretching across the stream. The bridge is in aid of the Custom House, and prevents the passage of boats up or down until an examination has

been made and the requisite permission granted. Sometimes the throng of boats is so great that a delay of many hours has to be endured, but usually, upon presentation of his passport, the foreigner's boat is allowed to go on its way without detention. Hom-kwong is a town of perhaps 20,000 people, who, on the advent of foreigners, are curious to the extreme of rudeness, and are said to be rather quarrelsome among themselves, a proof of this being shown us as we passed up the river one day, and saw a number of men, in a house that projected over the water, in a state of great excitement, pelting a boat that passed beneath them with stones, while the boat people responded with whatever missile came nearest to hand. The Roman Catholics have a mission station here, and a considerable number of adherents. The American Presbyterians have recently secured a place in which to begin work in the town. Within a radius of ten miles there are six or seven market towns, some of them of considerable importance. The extensive plain, lying chiefly on the north side of the river, is given up to a great extent to the cultivation of sugar-cane, from which the sugar made is said to be of a superior quality.

Proceeding on our journey up the river, and ascending several rapids, we pass the market town of Sam-kong, and after ten miles' travel enter the Wong-mau, or "Yellow Reed" Pass. Just below the pass, on the north side, is a striking group of hills; a dozen peaks or more of as many shapes clustering together, suggesting such names as "Sugar Loaf," "The Sphinx," "The Lion Couchant," etc., to characterise them, as they appear from different points of view. They are well worth half-a-day's explora-

tion, or more, if the traveller has the time to give, being full of caves of remarkable formation, and covered with a vegetation of great variety. White and tiger lilies deck their sides in the proper season. Orchids, ferns, and an astonishing variety of creepers, add interest and beauty to the ever-varying scene that moves before the eye. Through this interesting cluster of hills passes the foot-path from Sam-kong to Tai-wán, the passage over which affords a pleasant relief from the tedium of boat travel to those who are equal to a ten miles' walk and clamber over a mountain path. Just before entering the pass, our attention is directed to a rocky prominence overhanging the water, where it flows deep and tranquil before descending the rapids. Its sides are full of holes, in which great numbers of birds find shelter, and fill the air with their noisy chatter as they come home in the evening. On its summit are several houses in a position that the lovers of a breezy situation might envy. The "Yellow Reed" Pass has no striking features to distinguish it; the hills are smooth and regular, the waters deep and quiet. It is a favourable place for fishing with cormorants; and the effect produced by the light bamboo rafts of the fishermen, with their flaming torches, passing under the dark shadows of the hills in the stillness of the night, is very striking. Beyond this pass, the level space of cultivated land on either side of the river widens again, broken into by hills on the east and north, and walled in by a semi-circle of higher hills, rising one above the other to the south and west. Set against the background of these hills is the market town of Má-pó, whose well-preserved stockade, fronting on the river, gives it the appearance

of a small walled city. The hills that rise behind the town are very fine, some of them being covered with trees to their summits, presenting a richness of vegetation that attracts one irresistibly toward them. Half a mile up the river from Má-pó, passing over unusually stiff rapids, we come to the town of Tai-wán, situated, as the name indicates, on the great bend which the river makes at this point. To the east of the town is a beautiful hill, thickly wooded, with temples among the trees; at the foot of this hill a small stream of wonderfully sweet and clear water comes in from the north. So cold is the water, that in August it was scarcely comfortable to bathe in, showing its source to be in the deep, perennial fountains that well up from the base of the grand old hills piled in huge masses to the north. The scenery about Tai-wán is simply charming. All the varieties of woodland and plain, of hill and mountain, of river and brook, the quiet charm of cultivated fields, with occasional glimpses of the world beyond, which the passes at either end of the great bend shut out, combine to make it unusually attractive. The people are, for the most part, civil, although capable of great insolence and even violence, as has been proved on more than one occasion. The population of the town is about 10,000. The Romanists have a mission here, with a foreign priest residing in the town.

A short run from Tai-wán brings us to the Sam-hap Pass, the dividing line between the Ying-tak and Yeung-shan districts. A roaring rapid impedes our progress below the pass. This being conquered, we soon enter the narrow defile, and in half an hour are opposite a narrow

gorge that divides the hills on the south-west side, down which a beautiful stream of crystal water flows. The narrow passage allows no foothold on the margin of the stream, so we climb the shoulder of the hill to the right, from which we look down into its limpid depths, and see the great boulders strewing the bottom, and fishes a foot or more long darting in and out among the rocks. After walking a few hundred yards along the narrow path on the steep hillside, we find a path where we can descend to the water's edge, where, in the shadow of the cliff, with the water dashing at our feet, we drink in the beauty of the scene; it is a picture that memory loves to revert to. The hill on the one side is bare, except at its base, having, at the time of our visit, been recently desolated by fire; but the one on the other side is covered with the richest vegetation. Rendered almost inaccessible by the peculiar formation and position of the rocks, its floral treasures remain where Nature has produced them. By some mighty convulsion the strata of rocks have been upheaved until, broken asunder, they stand perpendicularly on their edges, and in the interstices between the strata masses of verdure spring forth in the greatest luxuriance. Ferns, tripling their usual size, orchids, begonias, etc., flourish in great vigour. At the head of the gorge, which is scarcely two furlongs in extent, the little stream divides, its two branches encircling the base of a series of hills, whose sides are devoted to the cultivation of tea, fields of this fragrant shrub stretching in verdant squares almost to the tops of the hills.

Emerging from Sam-hap Pass, a panorama of mountain scenery of exquisite beauty gradually unfolds before

our delighted vision. Immediately in front, and first to greet our eyes, rises a great mass of castellated rock with a dome-like summit, standing like the castle of some feudal chief, guarding the narrow passage of the river. Soon other peaks make their appearance, one by one, to the number of twelve or fourteen. Grand, rugged, and picturesque they are, united at the base, but each asserting its individuality, as it rears its rocky head aloft, and assumes a shape peculiar to itself. Their rugged sides are festooned with vines and flowers screening the mouth of many a cavern that opens among the rocks. The accumulation of leaves and dried grass among these peaks makes fine materials for the mountain fires that break out from time to time. It was our fortune on one occasion to spend the night at the foot of "Castle Rock" when these fires were in full blaze; the effect was wonderful. The mountains were girded by a fiery chain, its glowing links stretching over rocks and trees, and its sparkling folds falling loosely down the sides. These fires are hailed as a boon by the people, because they clear the hills for a fresh and more vigorous crop of grass for fuel, and drive away any wild animals that may be lurking in the tangled mountain growth. As we continue up the river we are met by a series of surprises. Mountains on both sides, in endless variety, show themselves as we proceed. Waterfalls sparkle as the little streams pitch over some precipitous height in their course down the narrow ravines. Quail and partridges call to their companions on the hills, pheasants sometimes fly out of the fields beside us, and everything indicates that we are in a place where Nature and not man reigns supreme.

Leaving the boat a few miles above the pass, we direct our steps to some tower-like rocks, at the foot of which lies the village of Ling-kwai. These rocks rise several hundred feet almost perpendicularly from the plain. They are black and jagged, covered with sharp points and indentations of various shapes and sizes. Out of these crevices grow trees almost to the very top, and birds find a safe and comfortable home in the small cavities that abound. To the east of the village the music of falling water attracts us, and a little searching brings us to a beautiful cascade that falls in a broad sheet over a wall of rock; a limestone deposit covers the ledges of the wall, and on them grows a rare and beautiful fern with downy leaves and a silvery under surface. To the west of the village is another waterfall almost hidden by a clump of bamboos. The water rushes down with such force as to be projected some distance from the wall of the precipice, and in a cavity behind the falling water, exquisite ferns, nourished by the never-failing spray, liang in rich folds. Passing these points of interest, the hills again descend to the river, and in the face of the perpendicular rocks that form the shore are many curious little cavernous openings, from which they receive the name of Kwai-lung rocks.

A short distance above this point, but hidden from the eye of the passing observer, is a beautiful spot embosomed in the hills, called by those who discovered it "Sabbath Glen." Its discovery was in this wise: One Saturday evening in our journeying we anchored near this point to spend the Sabbath. The mountains on either side are high and rocky, bold and picturesque, but as we passed

Our eyes along them there appeared no secluded nook, and we had fondly hoped for such a spot where we might spend the Sabbath hours in quiet meditation. In the morning we took some books and went to the village near at hand, bringing the message of salvation to the few unlettered peasants who gathered to hear us, and then proceeded to a fountain of water which gushed beneath the rock in the hillside, clear and sparkling in the sunlight. Its music we had heard as we passed along to the village, and thought, perchance, we might there find the spot we wished for. It was pleasant under the shade of the lofty trees, soothed by the musical cadences of the waterfall; but the natives soon came in such numbers as to destroy our expected quietude. We went further up the hill to get beyond them, and had gone but a few steps when a scene of exquisite beauty burst upon us.

There was a delightful glen literally embosomed in the mountains. On the further side was a perpendicular wall of rock, and on the nearer side the lower hills rose like ramparts, and shut it out entirely from the view of those passing on the river. Tall cliffs of unequal size rose in the midst of the glen, and between them flowed a brook of clear, sweet water, "chattering over stony ways in little sharps and trebles," keeping harmony with the songs of the many birds that come to feast on the fruit of the brambles that grow by the brook side. Tall, handsome grasses, in luxuriant clusters, waved their heads like rich plumes in the passing breeze. Large trees cast a broad and generous shade, under which we sat to rest. No man was there, and had it not been for signs

of cultivation of the land, and some rude defences on the cliffs, we would have thought none ever had been there. No heathen temple, no idol's shrine defaced the beauteous scene ; it was still in Nature's purity and simplicity. The hues of autumn, so rare in this southern clime, were painted on many of the leaves, reminding us of the beautiful and gorgeous scenes so familiar in our native land. It was a charming scene, a gem of beauty, and forms one of memory's brightest treasures ; we named it "Sabbath Glen" because of the day on which we saw it first, and because it spoke to us of rest, peace, and retirement from the world.

A little way above Sabbath glen, on the opposite side of the river, is the village of Lien-chow-ping, behind which rise high cliffs, whose caverns furnish places of refuge for the people in times of distress, the adobe walls enclosing one of these caverns being seen from the river high up on the side of the hill. On the white wall of the cliff nearest the river is a patch of yellow plaster, which is said to close the mouth of a silver mine, from which, report says, pieces of ore containing almost pure metal were taken, until it was closed by official command. Beyond the cliff of the silver mine two conspicuous peaks of almost equal size stand side by side. A short distance further on, in the same direction, is the "Fisherman," a remarkable rock, perhaps one hundred and fifty feet high, leaning over the water in a manner to suggest its name. The hills in this vicinity are covered with the low shrubs of the St. John's Wort, whose yellow blossoms in the spring time spread over them a gay mantle, and add greatly to the charm of the scenery.

Pushing up the river a short distance further, we come opposite the "Fortified Cliffs," to which a well-worn path up the mountain side leads us after a half-hour's climb. We enter a walled enclosure, a hollow space between two cliffs of unequal size. These cliffs look as if at some time, ages ago, they might have been one, and by some rude convulsion been rent asunder, leaving the face of the higher one white, bare, and precipitous, and causing the other to remain for ever incomplete, a mere fragment of a cliff. This smaller cliff is perforated with caverns, and, being fortified to the top, forms a safe and excellent look-out in times of danger, its isolated position giving it a fuller command of the valley below. In the higher cliff are several caves, the larger of which descends to a great depth into the bosom of the mountain. It is filled with a luxuriant growth of ferns, begonias, and a vine very much like the English ivy. The space between the cliffs is about one hundred yards square, filled more or less with rocks and boulders. In this mountain fortress the people of the plain have, from time to time, found a refuge from the attacks of hostile soldiers and robber bands. At one time, in the fourth year of the reign of Hâm Fung, it is said that 20,000 people fled to this place for shelter, bringing with them their cattle, household goods, etc. It is now much out of repair, the gates are gone, and the walls are crumbling; the enclosure has been turned into a field for the cultivation of maize. Only foxes now inhabit the caverns, while pheasants haunt the maize field. Along the foot of these cliffs the rocks project, and on the moist banks under these projections

hang quantities of the most delicate maiden-hair ferns. Crossing the river, we find in the side of a massive cliff another cave with a high stone wall obstructing the entrance. These mementoes of troublous times are full of pathetic interest. The poor people, whose life is but a struggle for existence at best, must have suffered fearful hardships when pursued and robbed by the desperate bands that ravaged the valley.

From the "Fortified Cliffs" it is but a short distance to the market town of Tsing-lin, a place of several thousand people, and the centre of a considerable trade. A stream from the north, navigable by small boats, joins the river here. From this point our course turns almost directly south. On the right extends a ridge of iron-grey cliffs inaccessible from the river side. One is conspicuous among the others on account of its peculiar shape, resembling a giant thumb, extending above the line of a closed fist. On the left a series of tower-like cliffs appear one after the other, most of them covered from base to summit with evergreen shrubs. After going six miles in a southerly direction, our course turns again to the north-west, and at the bend in its stream the river receives the waters of a small tributary from the south, the Tsat-kung creek.

A market town called Shui-hau is situated at the junction of the two streams. Following up this little stream for a short distance, we come into a district of the most varied and interesting scenery one can find anywhere. Rocky cliffs of every shape rise out of the plain. There are towers, and cones, and pinnacles, square and oblong pillars, rising one behind the other, their

rocky and often inaccessible sides covered with verdure. Their variety is astonishing; no two are alike, but all are striking. In the valley of this stream, near the village of Ü-shui, is a cave of the same name, which is remarkable for its depth, and the lake of crystalline water at the entrance. The over-land courier route from Canton, by way of Shek-kok and Tsing-ün, passes down this stream, the journey from Canton to this point being accomplished in four days, and the remainder of the journey to Lien-chow in two.

On the opposite side of the river, beyond the stretch of level fields, several peaks rise abruptly to a great height, between two of which is a ravine with a rocky path leading to an opening between the cliffs, the gateway into the region beyond. Reaching this level space at a height of several hundred feet, the view to the south is most fascinating. The whole Tsat-kung valley lies before us, with its crowded peaks, showing their wondrous variety of shape and colour. Turning to the north, there lies at our feet a small circular valley, a gem of its kind; a lake of verdure set like a jewel in the rocky bosom of the hills. Following the path up still higher, we come to a series of fortified valleys, rough and picturesque, and inaccessible enough for protection against any number of assailants. For some distance now the hills do ~~not~~ approach so near the river. We pass by numerous villages surrounded by fruitful fields and immense waterwheels, each furnished with a circle of bamboo cups, by which the water is turned into a trough, and thence conducted into the fields beyond. The rapids become more frequent, and are designated by

characteristic names. One is called the "Scissors Rapid" from its peculiar shape. There is the "Little Tiger" rapid, and a few rods above the "Big Tiger," and a little further still the "Gurgling Sack."

HAVING passed these in safety, we come abreast of the Yeung-shan pagoda, a nine-storied structure, built in the time of the Emperor Kien Lung (A.D. 1750), and supposed to exert a propitious influence over the surrounding country. This passed, we soon come in sight of the district city of Yeung-shan, one of the smallest of its order in the province, but provided with an excellent wall and some fine public buildings. A number of temples and monasteries occupy prominent and well-chosen sites on the hills extending from the back of the city to the north. On the south bank of the river, opposite the city, is Shing-nám market town, in which all the business and trade of the neighbourhood centres. The people in this vicinity are simple and well disposed; at each visit they have shown us great friendliness, urging us to preach, and expressing regret at the shortness of our stay. They have a reputation for great honesty in their dealings, a trait all the more praiseworthy because of its rarity. Within a year or two the Romanists have secured a foothold here, but their work is still in the initiative, and their converts few, if any. The "Three Steps" rapid, in front of the city, and the "Eight Tribes" rapid, just above it, tax the strength of the boat's crew.

~~A tax~~ In the river, as we proceed, soon hides the city from our view, and brings us to the entrance of the Lung-nga, or "Dragon Tooth" pass, at the head of which the "Thunder" rapid pours over the rocks. For some

distance upward the bed of the river is filled with large boulders that are rather dangerous to navigation. One of these presents itself as we enter the pass, and from a half-fanciful resemblance is called the "Dragon Head" rock. On the left a group of lofty peaks lift their heads into the clouds, among which is one of striking appearance, that has attracted the eye for a long distance. It is a double mountain, rising grand and symmetrical, its two divisions well defined, and partly separated by a shallow ravine; about one hundred feet from the top it parts asunder, ending in two dome-shaped peaks, which suggest the name of "Double Dome." Its stately grandeur is often veiled by clouds that hang in fleecy curtains down its sombre sides, affording only momentary glimpses to the admiring beholder. Above the pass for several miles the hills on both sides are high, rocky, and precipitous, and the land fit for cultivation very limited. Groves of wild camellias appear on the lower hills.

After passing the "Blackbird" and the "Dog Tooth" rapids, we come in full view of the opening of the great cave, of which we have had occasional glimpses for several miles. This cave is one of the great wonders of the river, surpassing in the splendour and beauty of its architecture anything of the kind yet found in the province. The distance to it from the river is about half a mile, the latter part being a steep climb of several hundred feet up the side of the mountain. The mouth of the cave is partly obscured by reeds and bushes, and as we stand before it, the first impression is that of a black and dungeon-like cavern, from which blasts of moist, cold

air strike against the face. Descending about twenty-five feet, we reach the floor of the cave. A feeling of awe and reverence comes over us as we look at the massive pillars exquisitely fashioned without the aid of human skill, and through the lofty archway in the wall that separates the outer from the inner section, catch glimpses of the white and glistening ornaments that rise from the floor, hang from the roof, and drape the sides in every direction. The idea of a grand cathedral is naturally suggested by the shape and ornamentation. The height is about one hundred feet, and the depth from the opening to the farthest point yet explored is about one hundred yards, the width being somewhat less. In the outer section, into which the strong light from the entrance shines, the forms of beauty remain, but the action of the light has discoloured them, and destroyed much of their attractiveness.

Crossing a stream of transparent water, we enter the inner section, torch in hand, pausing at every step to admire the wonders that reveal themselves on every hand. As the eyes become accustomed to the subdued light, the torch becomes superfluous, except when used in exploring the innermost recesses, or in descending the cavernous depths that yawn beneath us in the eastern part. Ascending the marble slopes, that rise gradually until the inner wall is reached, we find a convenient seat to rest upon, and observe at leisure the profusion of beauty spread around. All is of virgin whiteness, the hue of the snowdrift. Looking above, we see immense stalactites twenty and thirty feet long, hanging pendant from the roof like great icicles; and from the

floor beneath stalagmites rise in graceful pillars, while the drip, drip, drip of the water, charged with a solution of bicarbonate of lime, tells us that the process by which the beautiful forms have been created is still going on, adding fresh touches to the old, and bringing new wonders into existence. Plucking a small stalactite from the wall behind us, we find its slender end for several inches is a hollow, brittle cylinder, a thin film covering the end of the tube, which is easily crushed, and, when broken, discharges a few drops of water and some calcareous sediment.

At the foot, and on the sloping sides of the mounds of white rock, are many bowls of various shapes, filled with the clearest water. Their edges are scalloped and jagged, and their inner surface is covered with a rough formation, having the appearance of petrified sponges. The shapes of the objects about us are of infinite variety. We see chairs, thrones, pedestals, pillars, couches, and beds, with sparkling white drapery falling in heavy folds. The inner wall is pierced by numerous passages, that extend back into the heart of the hill, in which the beauty of the larger room is, if possible, exceeded. In them are pools of water several feet deep, but so transparent that they are not observed until a misstep coolly warns us of their presence.

Corrugated masses there are to which the feet easily adhere, and pillars with deeply indented sections, as if wrought by the most delicate chisel; slender spires and pinnacles, glistening for the first time when our light falls upon them. Everything is of untarnished purity, clear as the light, and spotless as the new-fallen snow.

A sense of fear sometimes arrests us as the hollow resonance of some portion we are passing over suggests the thought that we are walking over the thin covering above some fearful pit. Not the least of the wonders of this cave is the effect produced by the human voice, especially in singing. The numberless echoes blend in such perfect harmony, that from a certain point a single voice has the effect of a whole chorus, and even the lightest note, if clearly uttered, is faithfully reproduced from the dome and corridors of that grand chamber of silence.

The Chinese have left the cave untouched, so that nothing mars our contemplation of its perfect beauty, as produced by the hand of Nature. Native superstition in regard to it, however, appears in the names by which it is known among the people. It is called by some the "Ox Cave," from a belief that if cattle, when diseased, can be taken into the cave and left there for a night, they will recover. Another and more common name is the "Shing-sin," or "Genii Cave," so named, it is said, because a man from Yeung-chun, by a long course of fasting and meditation, which he accomplished sitting on a certain projection still pointed out to the curious, attained immortality by being changed into a "Sin," or genie.

Coming down the hill from the cave, we find some living springs at the foot, where the water wells up among the sand and pebbles, and passing through one of the worst specimens of the villages that disfigure the fair face of Nature, we regain the boat and proceed up the river. We pass several small villages before a bend in the stream brings us to the market town of Siu-kong, situated

on the northern bank. The town itself is insignificant, but is thronged with busy multitudes on market days. Some of the people are rather rude and lawless, these, no doubt, being importations from the lower districts, while the native peasantry are quiet and inoffensive. The high hills in this neighbourhood, with their rocky caverns afford hiding-places for dangerous wild animals. Tigers and leopards are frequently met with, and several slain every year, their skins and flesh being exposed for sale in the market-place. The natives distinguish the great tiger by the marks on his forehead, which they say are in the form of the character Wong, "king," being *prima facie* evidence of his kingship over the beasts. Small deer and mountain fowl abound. There are few, if any, among the people who make a business of hunting, there being no convenient or profitable market for the products of the chase. When the lair of a tiger or leopard is known, a dozen men or more, with guns and spears, surround the place and surprise the creature, killing it with unnecessary barbarity, and often utterly spoiling the pelt by the numerous spear thrusts and bullet holes.

Behind Siu-kong stretches a semi-cylindrical valley, through which flows a small stream, and up which the road leads to Wong-fan and Sai-kong markets. In the hills along this valley are coal deposits, and mines are about to be, if not already, opened. The arrangements for opening them were completed at the beginning of last year, the only obstacle then, in the way being the want of agreement between the prefect of Lien-chow and the district magistrate of Yeung-shan as to the division of the revenue accruing to them from the mines.

On the opposite side of the river from Siu-kong is a hill, with a fortified crest, which forms a conspicuous object for some distance up and down the river. The hill is thickly wooded for about two-thirds of the way up its sides, the rocky crest rising from a plateau of pine trees.

The course of the river here is much broken by rocks and rapids. Just below the town is the "Pine Apple" rapid, and above the town is the "Nobis Drunkard," while a short distance further up the stream the "Confusion" rapid rushes down abreast of a high hill, far up the steep sides of which a footpath runs along. Beyond this hill the country opens a little, giving space for rice and corn among the smaller hills. Several groves of camellias on the right promise a fine show of flowers to those who pass at the proper season, which can be enjoyed while the boat accomplishes the difficult task of ascending the Wong-kam rapids. Above this point the river makes a bend through a small plain, in which is the village of Shek-loh, whose pea-nut oil factories, enclosed by mud walls, indicate the nature of the principal business done there. Flocks of white egrets fly up and down the river, settling in the fields or on the river beach.

Swinging round another bend, ascending the "Yellow Ox" rapids, passing an old fort on the right and a village on the left, we turn once more into the general north-west course, and after passing the "Coffin" rapids, come to the *hot-water springs*. When the water in the river is low, several springs bubble up among the rocks on the shore, but the principal spring is a few yards off in the little ravine; it is enclosed in a circular basin about a yard in diameter and several feet deep. The water is too hot

for the hands to endure many moments. It possesses no medicinal qualities, a bottle having been tested, showing simply water and nothing else. The people from the village near by improve the convenient provision for laundry and other purposes.

The next object of interest, about two miles further on, is the "Dragon Cave," in a hill on the left, at the foot of Tai-li Pass. The opening of the cave, which is but a few yards from the water, is hidden by a temple, the keeper of which rises from his opium couch to demand a contribution of fragrant oil for his lamps from all who enter. The cave is a very remarkable one, having an air of great antiquity. The sides and pillars are full of strange hollows and indentations, and the roof is composed of many concave surfaces of rock, with fragmentary bits of stalactitic formation. About two hundred yards from the entrance the floor descends, and an accumulation of soft mud and water renders further progress uninviting. The roof in the inner part is pierced with openings that extend far up into the rock, affording retreats for myriads of bats, which, disturbed by the unusual appearance of lights among them, flit about uncomfortably over our heads. The walls and roof are of a dull-grey colour, showing but little variety. The cave is said to be twenty miles deep, exit on the other side of the mountain being possible. The accuracy of this statement remains to be verified by actual exploration.

The Tai-li Pass, which we now enter, deserves more than a passing glance. A high perpendicular wall of rock rises abruptly from the water on the left, a sheer precipice, whose whitish surface is varied by numerous

apertures, while vines and shrubs hang from the seams and crevices. The hill on the opposite side, high and majestic though it be in its first appearance, reserves its grandest side until we are about to emerge from the pass, when by a slight turn in the course of the stream a wonderful picture bursts upon us. The rugged brow of the cliff is encircled by a fringe of evergreen, huge masses of rock, like stalactites from a cave, overhang the sides, while a beautiful waterfall throws a sheet of silver over the shelving projections. We turn again to the other side, and see the cliff, receding a little from the shore; as it reaches the height of its grandeur in a noble peak, whose bare, white walls, rising above the accumulation of earth and stones at its foot, is seen for a long way up the river. The best view of this pass is obtained by looking back from the top of the boat as it moves slowly up the river. Its charms increase the longer we look at it, and the more fully we note the surroundings in which it is set.

As we proceed up the stream the eye is never weary of the ever-varying scenes. The rapids are no longer tedious, as they give more time for observation. Several small villages appear among the groves of trees on either bank, the largest of which, Kai-t'an, is just above a steep-walled cliff on the north side, against which the stream strikes, flowing partly under the projecting wall, and then turns aside. Above this we enter the Tung-hau Pass, where solid walls of grey rock hold the stream in its narrow channel. The sides of the cliffs facing the river are almost bare, the crown of vegetation on the top extending over their summits in places. In the walls on the south side are several small caves, difficult of

access, which have been fortified and used as retreats in times of distress. At the head of this pass a stream of some importance flows in from the south. It is called Pak-fu creek, after a market town of the same name situated a few miles up its stream. It flows down through an interesting valley, sweeping the southern boundaries of the country of the Aborigines, or Iu people, and is navigable by small boats for a distance of twenty miles to the town of Chai-kong.

In the rocky hill on the west side of this stream, just before it flows into the river, is the cave of Kun-yam. A temple stands before the entrance, shrines fill the interior, and images without number are seen on every shelf and projection among the rocks. The walls are black with the smoke of the incense, and the visitor almost suffocated by its fumes. The cave is said to be very extensive, three large wax candles, burned successively, being needed to light one to the end of it. The hill above it, and the one on the opposite side of the main stream, are well wooded, but the sharp-pointed rocks of which they are composed make the ascent difficult; a mile from this point we reach Tsom-t'au, or "Pillow Pass." The walls of this are not so high or barren as those of the one below. They are like palisades slightly overhanging the water, with ferns, grasses, and shrubs growing abundantly on the unseen surface. Over the face of the eastern wall, at certain seasons, six beautiful waterfalls descend about forty feet into the river, all of them in view at the same time.

The hills on either side are covered with many flowering shrubs: roses, azaleas, crêpe myrtles, oleanders, clematis,

etc. Among the trees are birds of gay plumage, not seen further down the river; small deer sometimes come down to the river's brink, and the call of the partridge is heard incessantly on the hills. A mile or two more, and we are at Lung-so-t'am, noted for the three foaming waterfalls that pour over the north bank of the river at this point. Summer and winter their melodious dashing never ceases, only they are increased to six or eight when the water is plentiful. The stream from which they come flows down a little ravine, over which the footpath leading to Lien-chow passes. On its banks are several incense mills, and near its source a village in a picturesque position high up on the hill.

Half a mile from Lung-so-t'am we enter the Yeung-tiu, or "Sheep Leap" Pass, the most remarkable and beautiful of all the passes on the river. It deserves a longer study than is usually given it in the hurried journey up or down the river. It is, perhaps, less than a mile in length, and through it the river flows in a narrow channel, obstructed in places by heaps of fallen rock, the sheer walls rising up a hundred feet and more. They are not merely perpendicular, but overhang the water in many places, the sides converging, so that a mountain sheep bounding in full career might possibly clear the chasm at a leap. The rocks of the sides are of a peculiar formation, being in all sorts of fantastic shapes. The whole pass looks as if some subterranean cavern had been rent open, and all the strange shapes that we regard as the peculiar characteristics of caves had been thrown open to the light of day. The formation is chiefly of calciferous rocks, and queer mushroom-shaped projections, over

which the water pours in places, are formed by the calcareous accretions deposited by the water as it falls. The passage is so narrow that the stream is shaded completely by the shadow of the walls at certain times in the day. Graceful cascades fall over the rocky sides, ferns in the greatest profusion grow under the projecting crags, and little birds, unseen before, with blue wings and brown breasts, flit about the rocks, and find a home in the numerous cavities.

A great mass of rock almost fills the stream in the middle of the pass. It is full of curious holes on every side, and is called the "Rock of the Genii." From its top, looking up and down, the pass is seen to greatest advantage. But no matter where we look the picturesque beauty of the scene is most fascinating. As we come to the end, the wall on the right is the first to recede, while, on the left, as if to add yet one more charm to the scene, an exquisite waterfall pours its shining stream from the highest wall, which, as it falls on the successive shelves of the lower projections, has the appearance of three or four distinct cascades, each striving to outdo the other in the descent to the river. From this point onward the river winds among picturesque hills, down whose abrupt sides is seen the gleam of descending water, rushing down the narrow ravines, or pitching over high precipices.

A few miles' further travel, and we come to the tenth and last of the mountain passes, the Ma-miu, or "Horse Temple" Pass, so named from a niche in the northern wall, in which is a well-defined image of a horse, seen, perhaps, most favourably when descending the river. This

pass is not a continuous narrow defile as the one below, nor has it the weird, fantastic charms of its neighbour. The precipitous walls are a whitish-grey, with streaks of red, and are destitute of verdure. On the south the cliff projects several yards over the water, and from some inner fissure in the rock a stream of water pours from beneath the over-hanging mass into the river. In this and the passes below are seen evidences of the terrible freshets that sometimes swell the river. Twenty and thirty feet above the ordinary level of the water are lodged logs and drift-wood, showing the height to which the water sometimes rises when heavy rains bring down the floods from the hills, and the now beautiful and transparent stream is transformed into a fierce and foaming torrent. Emerging from this last pass, we slowly ascend the "Horse Face" rapid, when the Lien-chow pagoda greets us, as it stands out conspicuously on a prominent hill that rises abruptly from the southern bank of the river. Passing this, we escape at last from the mountain barriers that have walled us in on either side so long, and look across the beautiful plain of Lien-chow. A range of high mountains, with cloud-wreathed summits, stretches away to the west and north, marking the line of division between this and the adjoining provinces.

CHAPTER IX.

LIEN-CHOW AND THE IU PEOPLE.



FROM the base of the pagoda, at an elevation of several hundred feet above the river, we gain a noble view of the Lien-chow plain as it stretches west and north. Fifty villages or more, with their evergreen grove of banyans, camphor, and other trees, are seen in the space swept by the eye, while in numerous valleys, nestling beyond the mountains, are many more that do not appear. Great hills in lofty terraces rise behind us to the south, and on the opposite shore black peaks, with jagged summits, stand out, as if ready to answer questions from their southern neighbours. One lofty, isolated peak lifts itself in simple grandeur apart from the rest. Its hither side is a wall of perpendicular rock, but from the upland plain behind a path leads to the summit. As seen from the pagoda, the upper portion of its rocky mass presents a most striking profile of an enormous human head, showing a majestic but benign countenance, gazing with watchful eye over the city and plain beneath. This striking likeness has won for it the name of the "Old Man of Lien-chow" from the foreigners who have seen it.

Its Chinese name is Sha-mo-ling, "Mandarin Hat Hill," and it is evidently considered the presiding genius of the place, the differentiating medium by which the geomantic influences of wind and water are distributed over the city and plain below. The city has been built with reference to it, the street that runs from the east to the west gate being laid out in a direct line with it, so that in walking toward the east its solemn head looms up continually before the eye. It is an object of superstitious awe, and is used in imprecations by the natives. To wish that a man may go to the top of Sha-mo-ling is a curse of dreaded import, and is especially feared by the Hunan people, who come and go in great numbers. It is the reputed abode of a dragon which can on occasion pour forth floods of water and deluge the country, as happened some years ago, when a most disastrous flood overwhelmed the plain, water rising to the roofs of the houses on the higher ground in the city. The people attribute this flood to the combined influence of thunder and the dragon, and declare that from the bowels of the hill the water burst forth with a most portentous rumble, and swept in an irresistible flood over the plain. The water, however, did not all come from this hill, nor yet from that still more remarkable place the great waterfall, thirty miles north, as the people in that vicinity assert; but a rainfall of almost unexampled abundance—a waterspout, in fact—burst simultaneously along thirty miles of the mountainous region that forms the eastern border of the Lien-chow plain; and the narrow pass, two miles below the city, was too small to allow this sudden and enormous volume of water to escape, so

that, for a time, the beautiful plain was changed into a lake, dotted with numberless evergreen islands.

No Chinese city that I have seen can compare with Lien-chow in beauty and attractiveness of surroundings. It is situated in the midst of a fertile plain, with endless variety of mountain scenery on every side. There are the massive barriers to the east, through which the river winds in its narrow rock-bound channel. To the south are groups of peaks of various shapes and altitudes; and on the west, trending a little toward the north, the great dividing range lifts for many miles its massive form, ridges of almost equal height, into the clouds, while in the foreground, and set in contrast with its solid regularity, are many striking peaks, like domes and towers, covered with a fresher garment of vegetation, and presenting a more picturesque aspect. The hills about Lien-chow are covered with snow in the winter, which falls to the depth of several inches on the higher levels.

The city proper of Lien-chow is a very small affair, but the suburbs extending to the south and east are the scene of a busy trade. In the eastern suburbs is a pagoda, dating, it is said, from the seventh century, in a half-ruinous condition, with a large red-walled monastery, and wide-spread baryans at its foot. It is a conspicuous and picturesque object, its crumbling tower bravely withstanding the ravages of time. Just beyond the limits of the eastern suburbs begins a stretch of low rocky hills, furnishing fine building sites, and from which streams of the purest water flow perennially. The western line of the city stretches along the river banks for nearly a mile, and the narrow stream is quite filled with boats.

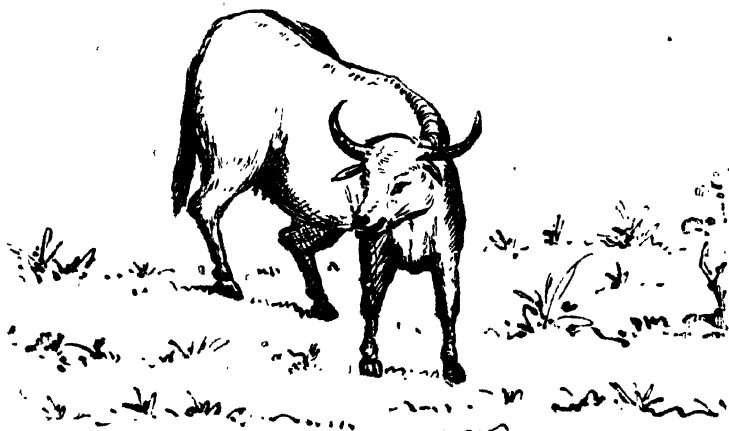
The population of the city is perhaps 50,000, composed of natives of the district, people from the southern parts of the province (who number about one-third of the whole), several hundred Hunanese, and a few Hakkas. The natives have an entirely distinct dialect of their own, which is quite unlike the Cantonese, and is, in fact, utterly unintelligible to strangers. Cantonese, however, is spoken by nearly all the people, and is the language of trade and general intercourse. All the chief branches of the business in the place are in the hands of the Cantonese—that is, the people from the districts near the provincial city, and they oppress the natives in many ways. The salt trade, a Government monopoly, is the chief business done, this being the distributing point for a large section of country still further inland. The boats from Canton discharge their cargoes into large warehouses, from which they are sent by shallow boats up the two small rivers, or by coolies directly overland into Hunan.

The natives of Lien-chow seem more gentle and docile than those of the lower districts. They have less energy and business capacity, perhaps, but certainly impress one as more civil and appreciative than the self-conceited myriads of the south. I have seen much of them in the city, in the market towns, and in scores of their villages, and certainly have met with more friendliness and consideration from them than it has been my fortune to receive in any other part of the province. A special interest attaches to the city just now, as the American Presbyterians are seeking to found a mission there, with missionaries resident. Negotiations for the purchase of land and the renting of houses fall short of completion

through the obstructiveness of the Sub-Prefect, a grandson of the great Tseng-kwok-fan, who, while professing great friendliness and willingness to assist us to the utmost extent of his power, arrests the men who attempt to sell or rent to us, beats the agent employed, and deters, through fear of punishment, those who would be glad to meet our wants. He is a typical Chinese mandarin, so completely and conspicuously two-faced. When we see him he is all smiles and profuseness; nothing can exceed his delight and willingness to serve us. The slightest hint that unnecessary obstructions are thrown in our way calls forth a storm of protestation. "The people are so ignorant;" "Their eyes are so small;" "They cannot see what is for their benefit, and therefore do not appreciate you. I understand your lofty and disinterested motives; I am the grandson of Tseng-kwok-fan, the nephew of the Marquis Tseng, you can trust me;" and laying his hands on our shoulders, or striking a melodramatic attitude with his hand over his heart, says, "There are no secrets between us; we speak heart to heart."

After such an interview we depart with every assurance of help, but feel sure that only fresh obstacles will be thrown in our way; and so it proves. Many assure us of their readiness to sell or rent, but the Ta-lo-ye (the Prefect) will not permit them, and will punish them if they attempt it. An incident that occurred a short time ago will illustrate one side of the character of this man. I was visiting Lien-chow on work in connection with the chapel, and, on the day after my arrival, had the misfortune to be severely gored by a water-buffalo, which attacked my little daughter as we were walking

through the fields. As soon as the Prefect heard of it he came in person to see me, although it was nine o'clock in the evening. He expressed great sympathy, and made profuse offers of assistance, proposing to send a physician, medicine, etc. I felt most grateful for his attention, and considered him a model of courtesy and kindness, until a few weeks later, when I saw the dispatch he sent



A WATER BUFFALO.

the Viceroy in regard to it, which, after mentioning the date of my arrival and the place where the boat anchored, ran as follows:—

“On the next day the teacher, B. C. Henry, went on the shore for a walk, several soldiers attending him as guards. An ox happened to be feeding on the grass by the roadside. The teacher began beating the ox to drive him off, whereupon the soldiers, wishing to protect him, and fearing lest the ox should gore him, besought him

to desist; but the teacher only laughed at them; and, relying upon his valour, caught the ox by the horns, grasping them firmly, and refusing to let go, until the ox gored him in the left thigh. The soldiers rushed immediately to the rescue, drove off the ox, and carried the teacher back to his boat. Upon their report I immediately sent a deputy to inquire into the facts, but the teacher would not allow him to enter the boat. Afterwards I went in person to inquire, and found matters very much as the soldiers had reported," etc., etc.

Scarcely a word of the above is true. There was not a soldier or guard near me, the ox attacked my little girl, pushing her against the bank, and I caught his horns to save her; and, after the ox became frightened and ran away, I walked back to the boat, so that the villagers who saw the affair might not know the extent of my injuries. The officer knew nothing about it until more than twenty-four hours after it happened. This versatile Prefect has been promoted to a higher post, so that the people of Lien-chow have been deprived of the light of his countenance.

In front of the city of Lien-chow two streams, flowing from almost directly opposite directions, unite, but the smaller one is not navigable. Two miles above the city the main stream divides again, the larger branch leading to Sing-tsze, and the smaller to Tung-pi, both places on the borders of Hunan. Ascending the courses of these three streams, we come into a country of great and varied interest, known as yet to but few travellers, and to these but imperfectly. The most interesting portion of all, the country of the Aborigines, is yet entirely unexplored. We take these streams in their natural order, beginning

with the first one on the left as we ascend, and also in the order of their size, the first being the smallest. Its direction is from the south, flowing in a portion of its course through a country of Alpine beauty and grandeur. It is a shallow, turbulent stream, filled with rocks and rapids subject to sudden freshets, as after storms of rain the water pours down the steep mountains along its course, and in the season of drought dwindling to a mere brook.

For the first fifteen miles its course lies through a comparatively level country, with broad fields of rice and other grain filling the space between the river and the hills. Many sweeps and curves bring it abreast of picturesque hills, on one of which, in a conspicuous place, are a fort and a monastery, with many red buildings grouped about them. As the stream is difficult to travel, the usual course is by footpath across the fields and over some low-lying hills to Sam-kong. Midway to this town is the guard station of Sha-ty-kong, near which is seen a grove of wonderfully fine trees, which invites to rest and the study of nature. The oil-bearing camellia shows itself in increasing abundance, groves of this shrub covering many of the hillsides. After passing several large villages, among which one, Lung-hau, is especially conspicuous by its high, substantial wall, a stout reminder of troublous times, we come to the river opposite Sam-kong. Here a fine substantial bridge a few years ago spanned the stream, but was swept away by one of those sudden floods so characteristic of this region.

Sam-kong is a town of considerable importance, and has appeared conspicuously in the history of this district.

being on the borders of the Iu country, and being the site of an important military station. The town is in two parts—the mart, where the market is held, and in which a large trade centres; and the walled city, where the garrison is stationed and the officers reside. The town is filled with busy throngs on market days, among which, on ordinary occasions, may be seen several hundreds of the Iu people, both men and women. They come from their homes in the high mountains, bringing freshly-picked tea-leaves of a large, coarse kind, poultry, maize, and herbs for sale, and taking back dried beef, tobacco, and cloth. They are lower in stature than the Chinese, do not shave the head, and wear the hair coiled up behind, both men and women having long hair. Their complexion is much like the Chinese, but some are almost copper-coloured. They have scanty beards, and not much dignity of presence. The women are very short, and many of them stout. Their dress is very similar to that of the men, being a jacket with close-fitting sleeves folded across the chest, leaving the neck open, and trousers that reach only to the knee; from the knee to the ankle a strip of ornamented cloth, about half an inch wide, is wound in such a way that the figures correspond. They wear no shoes, and the men have no hats, but some of the women wear a strange-looking head-dress, a kind of high paper cap encircling the coil of hair. The men seem to dress their hair more elaborately than the women, some that I saw having it carefully combed back, coiled in symmetrical folds behind, and decorated with ornaments made of the pith of the wood-oil tree, and cock's feathers. Both men and women have immense silver

earrings and necklets. They have great physical strength, and carry immense burdens. These remarks describe those I have seen in Sam-kong, and other market towns. Further particulars from other sources will be given below; meanwhile we proceed up the river.

From Sam-kong to Lien-shan, the road, which is one of the very best to be found in the province, follows the course of the river, and leads the traveller through one of the grandest of mountain passes, a veritable bit of the Alps transferred to Chinese territory. The mountains rise in stately grandeur on either side, majestic and awe-inspiring. They are mostly covered with verdure, and present a great variety of floral treasures, among which new species and even new genera may be found. After about twelve miles' travel through this magnificent gorge Lien-shan is reached, beyond which the scenery is less romantic, as the road continues in the direction of Kwong-si, which may be reached in two days' further travel. Lien-shan is a military station, established for the special purpose of holding the Iu people in restraint. The territory of these people is forbidden ground to the foreigner. In our passport a special clause is added, distinctly stating that we must not venture into their country, and the authorities of Lien-chow and Lien-shan take special care to see that these restrictions are carried out. Such difficulties only increase the desire to see and know more of them.

• Their little territory has quite a fascinating interest, especially to those who delight in ethnology. It is difficult to obtain reliable accounts of their history or descent. The meagre notices we get from Chinese

sources are very unsatisfactory. The chief sources of the scattered notices of them found in native books are the works of one Chik-nga, a man of considerable learning and ability, who flourished in the time of the Ming dynasty, and who, having been beaten because he neglected to dismount when the Nan-hai magistrate passed, fled to the Iu country, married one of their women, and lived among them for many years. He gives minute details of their manners, customs, etc., but unfortunately his book is now exceedingly difficult to procure. The Ius formerly occupied a much wider territory than they do now, but they have been driven back from time to time, until they are now confined to the high, and in many places almost inaccessible, mountains. They have repeatedly revenged themselves on the Chinese, breaking forth in marauding bands, burning, plundering, murdering, until by one great effort the Chinese drove them back into their present home, and surrounded their country with guard stations.

The following is a translation of a paper issued from the office of the Prefect in Lien-chow, accompanied by a map of the district, with the names and situations of the various tribes:—

“As to the origin of the Iu people. In the time of Emperor Shao-Hing of the Sung dynasty (A.D. 1131-1163) a native of Lien-chow, named Liao, held an official position in Kwang-si, and on his return home brought with him a number of Iu slaves. These he distributed among the mountains to cultivate the land. In a long course of years they increased and multiplied until they became eight large tribes. They continued to spread until the

increased numbers were divided into twenty-four smaller hands, and now they are scattered over all the mountains and hills. They engage in agriculture, supporting themselves by their own efforts. Among them were idle, restless fellows, whose time was given to robbing and plundering, and the people (the Chinese) suffered greatly from their depredations, until in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Kang-Hi (A.D. 1688), the officers of the three provinces (Kwang-tung, Kwang-si, and Hunan) united in subjugating them. A city was founded (Lien-shan) and further outbreaks prevented. Moreover, thirty-six military stations were established, encircling them as in a net. The Iu people were in great fear for themselves, and the Chinese (literary scholars and people) confidence being restored, dwelt in peace.

“In regard to the customs of the Iu people. The third day of the third month of every year they call the ‘Rice Feast,’ literally, ‘Thanks for rice to eat;’ the sixth day of the sixth month is called the ‘Thanksgiving to the Earth and Gods;’ and the fifteenth of the tenth month is called the ‘Hall of Mirth and Song.’ At this time every tribe slaughters pigs and sheep. The men and women eat together. Drums are beaten and gongs sounded, and they all sing in chorus. The youths and maidens go about independently, choose their mates, and are thus married. These people ascend mountains with the same ease that they walk on the level plain. They sleep in the open air as readily as in a room. Every year, according to custom, some of them come to Lien-chow bringing tribute, and are rewarded with wine, oil-cake, and salt. In front of the great hall each receives his portion and

departs. In their dress they use light-green cloth, embroidered in the five colours, with floss silk, and the form of an old cask worked on the back. These are called their variegated clothes. The men and women bind up their hair, and wear large earrings and silver circlets around their necks. The young men, when they come of age, wear an under garment of red cloth, and stick a white cock's feather in their hair. The women wear a three-cornered turban, pointed at the top, and round at the bottom. Such is the dress of the Iu people."

Another account says: "Fifteen miles south-west of Lien-chow, and about one hundred and thirty-five miles in circumference, is a region of lofty mountain ranges, full of steep and dangerous places, where the Iu people dwell. All the Ius comb their hair into a tuft on the crown of the head, and go barefooted. Clothes made of striped and coloured hempen cloth, with green and red colours, and cock's feathers adorning the hair, are considered beautiful. Their disposition is fierce and cruel, but they are intensely superstitious. They delight in killing their enemies. They can endure hunger for long periods. When the children begin to walk, they sear the soles of their feet with hot irons or stones, so that they become hard like wood, enabling them to walk through thorns and briars without injury, it is said. The products of their country are Indian corn and pine timber."

The river from Sam-kong to Lien-shan divides their country into two sections. That to the west stretches through the high mountain ranges on the borders of

the province for several days' journey, and the people in this region are not considered so fierce and dangerous as those to the east. They are still frequently called the Ping-ti-Ius—that is, "Ius of the plain," a name they formerly bore when they occupied the low lands adjacent, to distinguish them from the Ko-san, or "high mountain Ius." They are all united under one head, but the "highlanders" have ever been the more fierce and independent. On the east is the great seat of their power, where the eight great tribes dwell, where their government centres, and where it is not considered safe for an outsider to venture. There, in their lodges perched on the steep hillsides, and reached by perilous paths, they live and flourish, if reports can be trusted, which say that among them are many men of wealth, who dress in fine clothing and live in comparative comfort. They have no written language, consequently no books or literature of their own. A few of them understand Chinese, and schools for teaching Chinese have been opened from time to time among them, but not with much success.

Their language seems to be entirely distinct from any Chinese dialect. They believe in sorcery, and use charms and incantations. They are looked down upon by the Chinese, who constantly speak of them as the Iu-tsai and Iu-mui, terms expressing contempt. Many wild tales are told of their strength, woodcraft, and cruelty; and not least widely believed, of their possession of tails. On the other hand, many pleasant incidents are related of their faithfulness to each other, and of their great hospitality. The latter they carry to absurd extremes,

regarding it as a deep insult for a guest to leave one house and go to another during his visit to a place, such a course implying to them some unpardonable neglect on the part of the first host. They do not intermarry with the Chinese, and can seldom be induced to go far from their homes.

They are strongly bound together as a people. An instance of this unity was given a few years ago. On the Hunan side of their territory, bordering on the Kiang-wa district, some Chinese had purchased a tract of timber land from the Ius, under an agreement that they should remove from it in three years. The time agreed upon passed, and they did not move; four years went by, and still they made no preparation to leave, notwithstanding threats that force would be used if they did not go. At the end of five years the Chinese appealed to Kiang-wa for help, and the soldiers were sent to dislodge the Ius. The Ius prepared to resist, and sent to their friends and chieftains for assistance, accompanying each message with a piece of pork, a sign that the message was all-important, and must not be disregarded. All who received it responded without delay, and bands of Iu braves from all the surrounding country hastened to the support of their comrades. It is said that an army of ten thousand gathered to resist the Chinese (the number is no doubt exaggerated ten-fold), but that, being poorly armed, they were soon beaten, and nearly one thousand slain (another evident exaggeration), besides many prisoners captured.

Among the prisoners was one greatly superior to the others. His complexion, it is said, was almost white,

and his dress much finer than that of his fellows, who bowed with reverence in his presence, almost worshipping him. He was supposed to be the king's son, and was taken to Kiang-wa city, where he was beheaded along with the other prisoners captured. The number of these people is variously estimated, but usually greatly exaggerated. The number claimed varies from 50,000 up to several hundred thousands, the former being, no doubt, nearer the truth, and that probably is in excess of the actual population.

CHAPTER X.

AT THE HEADWATERS.



LEAVING the country of the Iu people with that halo of mystery which always surrounds strange and imperfectly known regions, we return to Lien-chow, and direct our attention to the other streams, which are by no means devoid of interest.

A short distance above the city we come to the junction of these two streams. A striking point of land stands in the angle of division, and bears the picturesque name of "Cormorant Beak." We follow the stream to the west, and enter a country of endless variety and absorbing interest. The first section of this small river, reaching to the entrance of the valley of Shek-kok, is fifteen miles in extent, through which it winds in one continuous succession of curves, each turn in the stream disclosing some new charm in the landscape.

The water is transparently clear, and flows over many shallow rapids, up which the boats must be dragged by main force. Many dams or weirs cross the stream, with only a small passage a few feet wide for boats to pass up and down. These dams are built diagonally across the stream; and in the lower extremity, where the water pours

in its increased volume, are set immense waterwheels, twenty feet and more in diameter, with a circle of cups arranged in a slanting position, and large pieces of bamboo matting attached for paddles. The force of the current drives the wheels, and the endless succession of cups pours a constant stream of water into a large trough, which in its turn is connected with drains that distribute the water over the fields. More than a score of these dams meet us in the first fifteen miles, and they continue with nearly equal frequency all the way to the head of the stream. It is a matter of not a little skill to guide a boat successfully up and down these dams. The boats on this stream are all low and narrow, drawing but a few inches of water. Their chief business is to carry salt. They are manned by people from the villages along the river, who combine farming with boating. They usually travel in bands of twenty or thirty, and help each other over the rapids and dams, being hitched together by chains for this purpose. Several hours are often consumed in working a chain of twenty boats over the more difficult of these obstructions, and the traveller down the river has his patience sorely tried as he watches the slow process, the channel being too narrow for two, and ascending boats having the right of way.

From the river footpaths lead through the hills to the various towns, offering many attractions as they wind along the feet of lofty mountains, through deep and picturesque glens, and in places past deserted coal mines, whose black debris disfigures the grassy hillsides. These ruined mines, with their mouths choked by falling earth and shrubs, show how miserably fruitless have been the efforts of the natives to procure the coal, of which good veins

are found in many of the hills. The river in many places is lined with trees, quite different from those familiar to the eye along the more southern streams. Broad stretches of white-bloomed feathery grass bend before the wind in billows of silver, presenting a most enchanting picture. Tall mountains on either side, fields of golden grain, villages with white-washed houses appear, each adding some peculiar charm to the scene. In several places the river flows under the ledge of over-hanging cliffs, whose white rocky walls tower for hundreds of feet above us, with many crannies for the birds.

One of the first objects to attract the attention a few miles from the mouth of the stream is a large temple erected in front of a deep cavern, called the Cave of the Dragon. The formation of the walls and roof of this cave are very striking, grotesque forms in dull-grey colours, and white glistening shapes of great variety. Many chambers lead off in various directions, but an accumulation of water prevented any extended exploration. Approaching the end of this first section, we come to the plain of Shek-kok, which opens a fine prospect to the west, the market town being near the river. The entrance to this plain is marked by a lofty peak in the shape of a half-dome rising behind the town, conspicuous among its fellows for many miles around. At its base are smaller hills, low bluffs with craggy sides, and filled with caves. Several of these open toward the road that leads up from the river, their dark mouths showing the way to unexplored interiors. Shek-kok is a very small market town, with only one street, and no business except on market days. Thirty or forty of the Iu people may be

seen here when the market assembles. A little stream flows down through the beautiful plain, which is several miles in extent, with twelve or fifteen villages, some of them quite large, built against the hillsides, and overlooking the fruitful valley, which, when I saw it, was entirely covered with a rich crop of rice, just ready for the sickle.

On the northern side of this plain one hill especially attracts the eye. As we look at it from the river, it is a perfect cone, but loses its symmetry somewhat when viewed from other positions. It is covered with trees to the very top, the base also being surrounded by a fine grove, a large proportion of the trees in which are oaks, the *Quercus glaucus*. It rises about 1,200 feet above the plain, and has several caves, which the people carefully guard, the largest one being near the top. The village at its foot is the most extensive in the plain. A short distance east of this green mount we find a little stream springing from a shallow cave at the base of a lower hill, and spreading into a transparent pond of wonderfully cool, sweet water. A few miles up this plain and the mountain walls approach, leaving but a narrow space, through which the path leads into the wild regions beyond, where the Iu people live.

A ten miles' walk from the river at this point brings us into dense forests filled with game of various kinds—wild boars, tigers, bears, deer, etc., and not least in number, if small in size, monkeys, one colony of these animals, near the borders of the cultivated land, being said to contain at least one hundred individuals. These mischievous quadrumanes are a great pest to the peasants, stealing their corn and sweet potatoes, and cleverly elud-

ing all snares set to capture them. If report can be believed, this forest presents many attractions to the naturalist, to the hunter, and to the explorer. The natives do not venture into it alone, but go in bands of at least ten or twelve when business calls them there. They build huts to live in, and set guards about, while they cut timber and firewood.

From Shek-kok to Yung-shü it is five miles by river. One bend in the stream introduces us to an entirely new and freshly-diversified scene. The mountain wall on the east is, perhaps, 1,000 feet high, the summit line in places being like immense parapets, with openings here and there, through which we look into the space beyond. One hill in particular, called Ha-lat-shan, "Crab Hill," has a large natural doorway near the top, while at its foot lies a great mass of rock, thrown down at some time from the top. A short distance further, on the bank of the river, is a very remarkable detached cliff, a huge mass of castellated rock, riven off at some former period from the higher cliff behind. Tradition attributes this work to one Prince Chan (his posthumous title), who, in reward for a worthy life, received divine honours after death, and has attested his power by rending the rocks and other equally wonderful performances, with what benefit to himself or others we know not. A small temple dedicated to him stands in a cleft in this rock, beside the narrow path that runs along the steep side above the water.

On the west, a line of lower hills branches off from the main ridge behind, converging to a point near the shore. Several of these near the river are of white calcareous rocks, covered with a rich verdure, and groves of large

and beautiful trees. These hills divide the plain of Shek-kok from that of Yung-shü, which centres about the little market town of the same name. In this plain are about twenty villages, most of them large and well built, surrounded by substantial walls. A creek flows in from the north-west, called Talung-shui, coming out from a narrow gorge in the hills, and pouring in the springtime a wild and turbulent stream into the rich plain below. Ten miles up this creek is a large settlement of Ius, who, under Chinese direction, prepare, and bring out for sale, large quantities of charcoal. On the hills along this creek grows a species of wild crab-apple, with a quince-like flavour, and a variety of small pears.

The market of Yung-shü is very small; a number of the Iu people always attend. I saw a fine young spotted deer brought in from the hills, and offered for sale. It had been entrapped, and only suffered a slight injury to one of its antlers. At one village is a small but flourishing plantation of the trees on which the wax-insects feed, and from which they collect the insects twice a year for the manufacture of wax. In front of another village, the largest in the plain, is a wonderful spring, surrounded by immense trees, enclosed by stone walls ten feet square, and furnishing an exhaustless supply of the purest water to the people.

As we proceed up the river the hills become of a black, hard, barren rock; and the trees less plentiful; villages are numerous, and the groves behind them present a peculiar appearance, with stacks of straw built around the trees at a distance of six or eight feet from the ground. It is a universal custom in these upper districts,

and over the borders in Hunan as well, to put up the rice straw in this way. The straw is needed as food for the cattle in the winter, and is piled up around the trees to protect it from dampness, and at sufficient distance from the ground to be out of reach of the cattle, which would soon destroy it. It gives a very odd appearance to the place to see thirty or forty young pine trees, each supporting a heap of straw around its trunk, like a great over-grown beehive.

Fives miles of travel brings us to the mouth of Chung-hau creek, the last and largest tributary of the stream we are ascending. It has another name, the "Burnt Dam" Creek, so called, it is said, from a strange occurrence, by which a dam, composed chiefly of stone, near the mouth of the creek, was in one night mysteriously burned away. This feat is also ascribed to Prince Chan, mentioned above. This creek is the outlet of a rich and attractive valley with a dozen villages or more, the chief of which is Chung-how, with a market of the same name adjacent. This is a remarkably well-built town, with a high wall and gates like a city, good public buildings, and many evident signs of prosperity. A low ridge of hills forms the eastern boundary of the valley, while on the west it is walled in by the main ridge, whose peaks in the afternoon cast their shadows quite across the valley. The groves about many of the villages are especially fine camphor, oak, and chestnut trees abounding. Most of the villages have but one gate for entrance and exit. This arrangement is very inconvenient to one who wishes merely to go through the village, but is an excellent safeguard against robbers.

From the mouth of the Chung-how creek, it is but a few miles to Sai-ngon, an important market town, with large villages closely built together on both sides of the river, and connected by a fine five-arched stone bridge. Near the town is an unusually fine temple called the Ling-shan Miu, and beside it a large school called the Man-wa College. The hills about this place are much lower, and most of them quite barren. Nearly all the land is under cultivation, the mountains rising only in the distance. Coal is found in some of the hills, and mined to a limited extent. The country has the look of having been long settled and carefully cultivated for ages. A short distance above the town there is one striking exception to the tame and verdureless hills that prevail.

A bold rocky peak, covered to its top with green and flowering shrubs, and surrounded by a heavy fringe of trees at its foot, rises abruptly several hundred feet in height out of the very midst of a smooth barren hill, its picturesqueness brought out more strikingly by contrast with its tame surroundings.

Another five miles traversed, and we reach She-kok-tam, the point at which much of the salt brought by boats is transhipped. Long lines of boats anchor opposite the village, in which a fine group of transit warehouses are built. From this point the salt is carried through the plain of Chung-how mentioned above, and over the mountains into Hunan, to the town of Ma-t'au-po, and thence by boat to Wing-chow, where, the cost of transportation being so great, it frequently is sold at the rate of ten catties for one dollar.

We are still ten miles from the head of the stream, but

travelling by water becomes more difficult as we advance, the rapids and shallows being more frequent and obstructive. A walk of five miles over a well-paved road accomplishes our purpose better than the long, tedious journey by boat, and brings us to Tung-pi, the head of navigation, and the main centre of trade on the river. It is a large and important place, the residence of a town-ship officer. A broad substantial stone bridge spans the narrow stream high above the reach of floods. On the south side, is the main portion of the town, a long street extending parallel with the river, showing many shops that would compare favourably with those of the larger cities in the south. An immense concourse of people gathers on market days, indicating a populous country surrounding. There are probably not less than 25,000 people in the plain that stretches around Tung-pi. Thirteen miles distant from this point is the first town, U-kwong-tau, in the Hunan province, at the headwaters of the river, that flows past the city of Kiang-wa. We are now at the extreme limit of our journey in this direction, the distance from Lien-chow being about sixty miles by water, but not more than twenty-five by land. We have ascended the uplands gradually, so that in an easy half-day's journey more the dividing ridge is passed, and the descent on the Yang-tsze side begun. We defer making this journey, however, until some future occasion, and, retracing our steps to "Cormorant Beak" point, prepare to ascend the main branch of the Lien-chow stream to Sing-tsz.

This stream is nearly double the size of the one to Tung-pi, but is broken in much the same way by rapids and dams. For the first few miles we pass almost under

the shadow of Sha-mo-ling, keeping near the base of the ridge, of which it is a spur, until the winding of the stream among the lower hills shuts out from view the southern part of the plain. The hills for some distance are less striking than those we have just left on the Tung-pi side, being smoother and of a different formation, red clay entering largely into their composition. The shores, for miles in extent, are covered with the most handsome grasses yet seen, many of the clumps rising in exquisite plumes twelve and fifteen feet high, and of delicate pink or lilac colour. After a few miles' travel we come to a little pass, with several bold conspicuous peaks on the right, the higher one being remarkable for its caves, one of which opens its great yawning mouth on the side facing the river, but so high up as to make entrance to it difficult. This cave is said to pierce the hill, but pools of water in the inner portion make the passage difficult and unpleasant. Several smaller caves open near the summit of the hill. Along the shore on the left is a good footpath cut in the steep hillside, from which, as we walk along, the beauties of the little pass are seen to best advantage. Beyond the pass are remains of coal mines, not now in operation, but which, from the amount of refuse scattered about, must have been quite extensive at one time. Want of proper drainage is the ruin of all such enterprises here.

The river now makes a great bend, sweeping to the west and back again to the north-east, and on the outermost point of the semicircle thus formed is a small pagoda, near the large village of Shui-hau, the first anchorage for salt boats on their way up from Lien-chow.

Forty or fifty of these boats tie up together for the night, and as the crews are all related, a constant stream of small chit-chat and family gossip flows from group to group, as they sit on the bows of their boats, waiting for the evening rice to boil, or take their evening smoke after it is eaten. Their conversation seldom rises above the sordid items of their daily traffic. Toward the west from this point is seen a group of pointed peaks, rising near together, and presenting an uneven outline against the horizon. They are known as the "Pencil Rock" Hills, a name more aptly applied than most Chinese designations.

In many places the hills are covered with trees and shrubs, the oil-bearing camellia being most largely represented. This shrub is extensively cultivated all along the river, groves hundreds of acres in extent rising to the tops of the hills in many places. These camellia groves are one of the most attractive features of this mountain country. The shrubs are of a graceful shape, and their dark-green foliage gives a peculiar charm to the landscape. When the plants are in bloom their myriads of white flowers cover the hills with robes of beauty but seldom surpassed. The nuts are collected in October and November, and vary from the size of a filbert to that of an orange. Many of the larger ones are encased in a rich brownish-pink shell, like the skin of the pomegranate. They are carried in quantities to the drying places in front of the villages, where I have seen tons of them spread over acres of ground drying in the sun. The action of the sun soon causes the outer shell to burst, and as the nuts drop out, they are carefully swept together and submitted to several days' more exposure

to the sun. They are then taken to the oil mills and more thoroughly dried in ovens, after which they are crushed and submitted to the press, where the oil is extracted. This oil is used in cooking, for dressing the hair, and also for medicinal purposes, and sold for about five cents per pound. As soon as the nuts are gathered the new flowers begin to open, and the young fruit is well set before winter comes on.

The country, as we passed through it in the clear October days, had a wonderfully fresh and clean look. No haze, no smoke, no sign of wear and tear on the hills, but, springing from their luxurious dew bath of the night into the exhilarating sun bath of the day, they had a most charming look of being freshly washed and cleansed. It was luxury to look at them, and new life to inhale the pure, sweet air wafted from them by the bracing north wind.

Owing to rapids and dams, over some of which the water falls three feet in one plunge, the boat makes slow progress, and allows time for hurried excursions to the tops of prominent hills to catch views of distant scenes. On the side of one of these hills is a small temple called "The Monastery of the Lofty Peak," which is remarkable for the magnificent sweet olive tree (*Olea fragrans*) growing in front of it. This tree, which is nearly forty feet high and of beautiful proportions, was completely covered on all sides with masses of most fragrant flowers. A short distance up the river a little stream comes in from the west. It flows down through the small plain of Po-on, in the centre of which is a market town of the same name, surrounded by a number of villages. At the

eastern entrance of this plain is a large hill—conical as seen in one direction, and pyramidal as looked at from another—obstructing the way, so that the little stream flows on one side and the footpath encircles its base on the other. On the eastern slope, which was covered with grass, were herds of small cattle feeding. Po-on, two miles from the river, is a walled town, an important market centre, with several bridges across the small streams that unite in front of it. One of these bridges is a wooden structure composed of thin boards loosely laid on bamboo poles, tied down in places by bamboo thongs, which make an incessant rattle as people pass over it. The bridge was purposely so constructed, on the supposition that this peculiar rattling noise is most pleasing to the spirits of the stream. If spirits have ears, and delight in such noises, they must enjoy a rare treat on market days, when thousands of hurrying feet keep up an incessant racket and tin most irritating to the nerves of ordinary mortals.

The chief attraction at Po-on is the Fuk-shan grove and monastery about half a mile north of the town. It is one of the most attractive spots to be found in the whole country, situated, as it is, in a small ravine, and surrounded by thick woods about two hundred acres in extent. Oak, camphor, chestnut, holly, and other trees cover the sides of the valley, some of them growing to immense size, making it deliciously cool. The trees and shrubs are festooned with hanging moss, falling in long streamers that sway in the breeze, often striking against the face as we walk along. The change of the atmosphere is felt immediately on entering the shaded

path, the delightful coolness being all the more grateful after the heat of the treeless plain outside. The stones and the trunks of the trees are moss-grown. From the moist earth beside the paths spring beautiful flowers of a kind unseen before. The trees are full of birds, and on the upper slopes are many springs of living water, that supply an unceasing stream for the little brook that flows away through the plain.

Ferns grow luxuriantly, and the sweet olives, here in their native soil, attain a height and proportion not seen in the south of the province. They are noble trees forty and fifty feet high, with a larger and more vigorous foliage, and a richer profusion of flowers, exhaling a sweeter and more abiding fragrance. So abundant are they, that in the season the poor grass-cutters on the hills, women and boys, are provided with large bunches of them, tied on their bundles of grass, or bound around their heads.

No more charming retreat have I seen in which to escape for a short time the heat and worry of Canton, than this sylvan glen with its manifold attractions. In the open space in the midst of the woods is a collection of temples, neither striking in architecture nor well preserved. A few priests reside here, Buddhism and Taoism flourishing side by side. In the lower part of this enclosure is the remarkable spring from which the place is named, enclosed by a stone railing about five feet square. The water rises out of a rock on which the Chinese character *Happiness* is traced. It comes up in a stream about as thick as a man's wrist through an orifice in the upper left-hand corner, flows through

a shallow channel worn in the rock, following the strokes of the character, and having faithfully traced this significant word, disappears through an opening in the rock at the lower side. It is difficult to say how much of this is natural, and how much artificial, but the people hold it in great reverence, and ascribe it directly to supernatural agency. It is supposed to have a peculiar connection with, and a special influence over, the clouds. In the spring of a certain year the Prefect of Lien-chow came to this shrine to pray for rain, and so timed his visit that abundance of rain followed his supplication.

Returning to the river, we continue up its stream, and are soon amidst lofty hills again. A swift current means slow progress, but the time is never irksome with these fine hills for company. Among the steep hills on the right are the remains of a settlement of the Iu people. Some years ago, thirty families of these people came from the distant mountains and founded a little colony here, but either the space was too small or the soil too sterile, or the Chinese harassed and defrauded them, so that they could not support themselves, and returned to their former homes. The ruins of their cabins can be seen, and the trees they planted, mostly wood-oil and peach trees, now well grown. Their land has fallen into other hands, and a small boy from the place, with a supply of firewood, showed a most precocious cleverness in bartering with the boatmen.

A short distance above this point we come to a full stop at the foot of the "Gayder Rapid," the longest, the swiftest, and the most difficult to ascend of all the rapids yet encountered. The water, inclined to spread

over a wide surface, has been confined into a narrow channel by two long stone embankments. It falls in one continuous descent about three hundred yards, the sound of the rushing torrent being like the roar of a cataract. No boat with its ordinary crew can make the ascent, so that it becomes necessary to unite the crews of several on one.

Before attempting the task, the boatmen all sacrifice at the little altar near the water, presenting offerings of pork and fowls, with incense and wax candles. Having safely passed this raging stretch of rampant water, we enter a fine gorge, through which the river winds in several curves, between bold and picturesque hills covered with a great variety of trees and shrubs. On the rough sides of the hills are many quaint and grotesque shapes in the rock. At one point, on the top of a low but steep-walled cliff, is a grove of peach trees, said to produce superior fruit of the cling-stone variety.

Emerging from this, the last pass on the river, we come into a rolling country, low hills near the river and high mountains to the east. The river becomes more sinuous even than below, almost doubling on its track in places. Swinging around one of these curves, we come abreast of the market town of Ma-po-shui, built on a bluff on the river bank above a pool of great and uncertain depth. In the valleys adjacent are many villages, and in the town a thriving business is done in pea-nuts especially, twelve large manufactories pouring out rivers of oil. Beyond the hills that line the river are many attractive valleys, those to the right being especially noted for their wonderful camellia groves, thousands upon thousands of

these shrubs covering the hillsides with a glistening mantle of dark-green foliage.

A short distance above Ma-po-shui we find a remarkable hill full of caves. On the riverside may be seen the entrances of four, one very large, revealing a black, mysterious interior. On the other side, for the hill is an isolated rocky cliff of limestone formation, there are still more to be seen. We explored several of them. The largest, with an entrance way full fifty feet in diameter, and about two hundred above the plain, we found to descend into the heart of the hill. Not being furnished with lights, we could not go to the end, but a strong current of air coming out indicated the existence of another opening. As we entered another near the base of the hills, we found the air rushing in, and concluded it must be connected with the one above. A third that we explored was like a tunnel, narrow and low-roofed, but with walls of finer texture than marble carved by hand. The formation in these caves is very beautiful, white and glistening, falling in rich and graceful folds, looking like fleeces of the softest wool.

For some distance we have had glimpses of the high range of mountains extending to the north-east. All the intervening hills dwindle into insignificance before their grand proportions. The clouds rest continually on the higher peaks, only lifting occasionally to show us their full outline. We are perhaps twenty miles from their base. From every point in the winding stream the eye instinctively searches them out, and rests upon them with a satisfied feeling, induced, no doubt, by their magnitude and solemn repose. They change with every hour of the

day. The roseate hue of the early dawn tinges them with a colour, and lights up their dark-green sides with a beauty all its own. In the increasing light, which reveals their form more distinctly, showing here and there the rude gash of some land-slide, or the glaring white surface of some crystalline rock, or the sparse covering of trees on the upper slopes, much of the subtle charm and mellowness disappears. The cloud-shadows cast by the noon-day light flit dreamily over their sides, soothing us into content; but this charm is sometimes broken by the shimmer of heat rays, which blind us as we look. As the day declines their charms return, and as the rich purple hues of evening spread their royal mantle over the wide expanse, a mysterious chain, woven by unseen hands, draws us toward the great mountains, and the human spirit is brought into sympathy and communion with the Divine Spirit through these noble works of His hands. The eye never wearies in its gaze, until the veil of mystery grows thicker with the deepening shadows, and, the darkness falling, shuts out the vision from our sight, but not from our mind, where it continues to live and repeat itself in after days, the halo of distance and lapse of time only softening its charms.

As we draw near, the mountains that have attracted us assume more definite shape. We see them to be a detached group of unique formation, and not the dividing range between this and the adjoining province, as we had supposed. As their outline becomes better defined, certain features are seen more clearly. White surfaces here and there indicate the kind of rock, marble perhaps, to be found. A waterfall of grand proportions is seen

pouring its white, foaming stream down one of the many ravines, the peculiar swaying motion of the falling volume of water and the clouds of dashing spray being distinctly observed at a distance of eight miles or more, attesting the appropriateness of the name, "White Water," given to it by the natives. Reserving the best for the last, we turn aside from these mountains, with their incomparable cataract, to the scenes more close at hand.

We are nearing the end of the journey by boat, and are asked to observe, as we proceed, the dams in this part of the river, and certainly they are worth a moment's notice. They are solid stone barriers built across the stream, with an opening seven feet wide for the boats. Thirteen of these occur in the last five miles, and, though much more expensive in the beginning than the ordinary structures made of pine piles and drift-wood, they show an immense economy in the end, by resisting all the floods that annually visit this region, tearing out the wooden dams so laboriously built, and bringing misery alike upon farmers, boatmen, and merchants. We pass the Sing-tsz pagoda, standing seven storeys high on the top of a small barren hill, its upper part much shattered by a stroke of lightning received a few years ago. Several stone bridges, really admirable structures, mark the upper part of this stream. At the head of navigation is Sing-tsz, "Child of the Stars," the most important town we have seen since leaving Lien-chow. It is the official residence of the Fan-chow, and the centre of a populous region, from twenty to thirty villages being attached to the market town. Its large permanent trade is increased by the throngs that come to the market every fifth day.

The dialect spoken varies considerably from that of Lien-chow, as does that of Tung-pi, and that of Po-on. The local patois of these four places, Lien-chow, Tung-pi, Po-on, and Sing-tsz, have a common groundwork, and are alike in general characteristics, but differ greatly in many points, making it easy for those who are familiar with them to detect a man by his peculiar speech. I may say at this point that through all these regions the people have treated us with unvarying friendliness. The first demonstration of hostile feeling on their part has yet to be made.

At Sing-tsz the river divides into two smaller branches, these dividing again into brooks, several of which we can trace to their sources in caves. The first of these primary streams on the west flows out of a remarkable cave at the foot of the dividing range. It is called the "Black Cave," from the colour of the rocks. It is apparently very extensive, the stream of water, a never-failing one, making it difficult to explore. The stream was only a few inches deep in the interior of the cave at the time of our visit, a deep pool, however, obstructing the entrance; but when the water is plentiful, I was told that a small boat is used to take visitors farther into the depths. Passing the mouth of this cave is the road leading into the remoter valleys, and thence into the next province. Half a mile to the east, around the shoulder of a projecting hill, is another "water cave," called the "Red Cave," and so named from a perpendicular wall of reddish rock that rises above it. It is much higher up the hill than the other one, being at least two hundred feet from the base, and is in the form of a great spring welling up from an

exhaustless reservoir in the heart of the hill, and pouring a constant stream down into the valley. The brooks issuing from these two caves unite a short distance below, and join the main stream at Sing-tsz. Following the base of the mountain barrier to the east ten miles further, we come to another of these streams flowing from a cave. A deep pool of bluish-green water spreads in front of the cave, and effectually prevents an entrance, but far in the rocky bosom of the hill can be heard the dripping of the water, as it forms the little stream that flows forth. The main branch of the river comes from the great waterfall, a fit beginning for the beautiful stream we have followed with such delight, while a fifth, but much smaller branch, flows in from the south, the source of which I had not time to search out.

The country immediately around Sing-tsz is chiefly composed of low, barren hills, and presents a rather desolate aspect, but a few miles distant in any direction the higher mountains relieve the monotony. To the north stretches the Shun-tau-ling, the "Gentle Head Bridge," from the base of which the "black" and "red" caves send forth their perennial streams. It is a massive but barren range, with scarcely a tree to be seen. To the east is the Fung-táu-ling, the "Respectful Front Ridge," over which the postage road through a corner of Hunan to the headwaters of the North River passes. It possesses more variety of form and more verdure than the other. These two ridges form the border between the Canton and Hunan provinces. To the south of these is the remarkable ridge mentioned above, the Tai-pin-ling, the "Great Slice Ridge." It is quite distinct from the

others, being of a later and very different formation. From Sing-tsz we see only the western border of it, but it extends through the district of Üe-üen toward the North River, a region unexplored as yet, but one, unless I am greatly mistaken, wonderfully rich and varied in natural beauty and floral productions, and in the midst of which will be found the watershed of the Lien-chow stream on the west, and the Hufig-k'ai stream on the east..

From Sing-tsz we may follow the course of the main branch to the waterfall, a winding way through a fine, farming country, and in distance twelve or fifteen miles, or, a much better plan, we may take the path leading directly to it, the white sheet of its descending water streaming continually before us, marking the goal to be reached. It is a six miles' walk to the foot of the fall. A turn in the road, however, shuts it out from view for a time just before we reach it, but the roar of the falling water guides us unerringly. When we reach the foot there is a sense of disappointment. It does not look as it did when seen from a greater distance, nor is its height to be compared with what we had expected, but it is wonderful. It falls full fifty feet over a broad, sloping precipice of black rock in three main streams, one much larger than the others, into a deep circular pool a hundred yards in diameter, and very deep. The water is almost ice cold. Thick masses of tangled shrubbery cover both sides of the vale through which it falls, an evergreen setting for this beautiful white gem. Under the shadow of high rocks on the south we rest on a cushion of leaves, with our eyes fixed on the fascinating scene. What

exquisite shapes the jets of falling water assume! How bewitching the changes they undergo from the brink to the deep green lake! As if flung by fairy hands, the water comes down like falling snow, or like the finest lace, or strings of pearls, or shining beads, but all the graceful images we can call up fail to express the endless variations and forms of beauty exhibited.

Breaking the spell of the fair charmer at last, we arise, and begin to ascend a path up the steep side of the southern wall, which has just attracted our attention. Climbing about two hundred feet up the slippery path, we reach an open space for observation, when a spectacle of wondrous beauty and grandeur combined bursts upon us. The sensations of that moment are not easily described, but are still less easily forgotten. The disappointment at sight of the lower fall only redoubles the joy now felt as the great main fall we had watched from the distance and lost as we drew near, flashes upon us in all its splendour, as it dashes with thundering echoes into the narrow gorge. The lower fall could not be seen from a distance because of intervening hills, and, owing to the peculiar shape of the hills through which the water pours, the main fall was invisible from the base, hence the illusion. From this point, where the glory of the great fall dazzles our eyes, it is still a quarter of a mile to its foot, and the question is, how to reach it.

Descending with difficulty the steep slope to the bed of the stream, which flows from the main to the lower falls down a most remarkable gorge in one succession of rapids, we start to pick our way toward the fall. The

gorge is about twenty yards wide. Its sides are of solid rock-polished granite, and the course of the stream is filled with an astonishing accumulation of boulders, ten, twenty, and some of them thirty feet in diameter, worn smooth as glass by the action of the water. For a short distance all goes well, but soon unlooked-for difficulties arise. We must wade or retreat. We do not long hesitate. With the fall before us, now temporarily hidden by heaps of mound-like boulders, all thought of retreat is banished. Discarding shoes, we creep over the slippery rocks, narrowly escaping many a plunge into deep, cold pools or foaming rapids, wading at times waist deep through the rushing torrent, with a stout Chinese coolie acting as support, and in several places making a bridge of his back when other expedients fail. At last the coveted position is reached, and we sit on a great rock under the magnificent cataract, the water falling three hundred feet in one grand plunge, breaking into crystal spray almost from the very top, falling in great folds of feathery whiteness, or like sheets of liquid silver sparkling with the lustre of innumerable diamonds. The sunlight through the scattering spray casts rainbows on the rocky side, some near the foot, others higher up, according to the position of the observer. No thought of food or fatigue can draw us away from such absorbing loveliness. It is only when the descending sun warns us that that fearful gorge must be retraversed before darkness comes on, that we turn our backs upon the fall, and then frequent backward glances hold our willing feet.

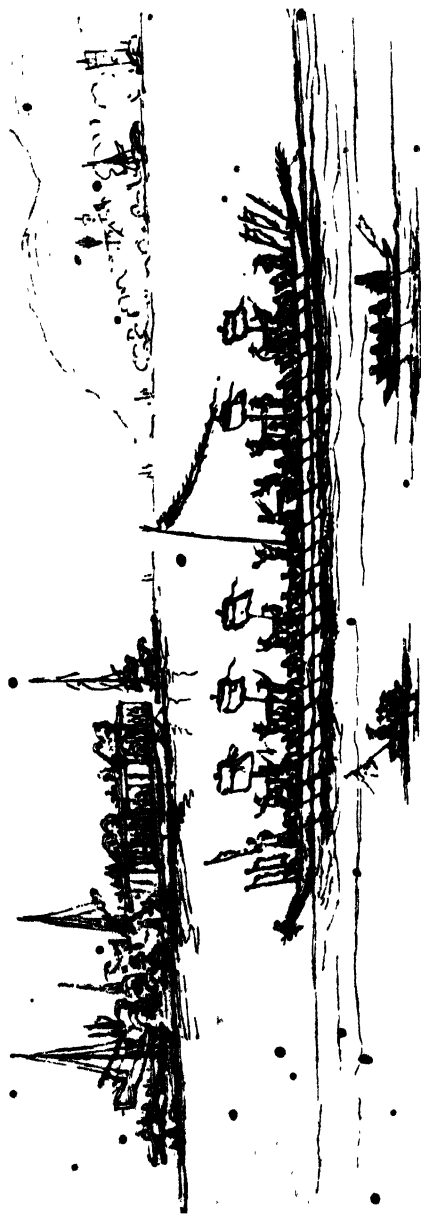
The question of return is even more difficult than

was that of getting hither. It is simply impossible to retrace our steps by the way we came. No amount of caution can secure firm foothold for descent in many of the places we have come up. Some other way must be found. The northern wall is tried, but after descending a few feet the glassy surface of the granite rocks affords not the slightest foothold. At last, after much searching, a precarious footpath, used by some fishermen, is found along the southern wall. Ascending some jutting rocks, we reach a narrow ledge in the steep wall, where, closely hugging the rock above, we manage to creep along. At one point the path leads underneath a little fall, where, fortunately for us, the stream of water is small, so that we pass with only a mild shower-bath. At another point there is no path at all, only two small pine logs, tied to the roots of a little tree growing out of a crevice in the rock, with a sheer granite wall below for two hundred feet. It is a severe trial to the nerves. After surmounting some lesser difficulties, we reach our first point of observation without mishap, and with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret begin to descend. Often in my dreams have I revisited the place, however, and found myself travelling along that perilous path. No more vivid or delightful picture lives in my memory to-day than that ever-falling, never-ceasing, endless volume of crystal pearl-drops leaping in mad delight down that giddy height into the granite-walled gorge below.

Not the least wonderful thing about this gorge is the strange commingling of various kinds of rocks. White and red granite lie in great masses side by side,

marble, limestone, sandstone, and trap are thrown together in delightful confusion, showing the upheaval and admixture of the various strata to have been complete when this great ridge was formed. Above the main fall the water descends in rapids for some distance, so that the whole fall is probably not less than five hundred feet, the climax being reached in that tremendous plunge of three hundred feet. For those who do not feel inclined to try the passage up the gorge just described, there is another way. • Half a mile to the north from the foot of the lower fall, a good path ascends the hill, leading to the top of the upper fall. From a point on this path is gained the most comprehensive view of the falls, where, without personal discomfort, they can be seen to admirable advantage. The stream that forms the fall comes from an extensive upland plain, which is filled with a vigorous but rather turbulent population, and was the home, not many years ago, of organised companies of robbers, who went forth in strong bands to plunder the people of the lower plains, until the whole countryside rose in arms, and defeated them in their own strongholds. On one occasion, as the people of this plain were celebrating the "dragon-boat" festival, one of the boats was drawn by the swift current into the rapids, where it was soon beyond control, and was swept over the precipice with the awful vortex of the falls, but one of the thirty-six men it contained escaping with his life.

Here, having reached the source of the Lien-chow stream, we debate the question of return. Two routes are open to us. We can retrace our course down the river,



DRAGON BOAT.

taking a rapid review, as the swift current sweeps us along past all the fine scenes we have examined more leisurely on the upward journey, or, leaving our boats, we can go overland to the head of the North River, and thence to Canton. We choose the latter course, and, crossing the dividing ridge into Hunan, we come, after two days' journey, to Ping-shek, an important town and military station in the south-east corner of Hunan. It is sixty miles from Sing-tsz to this point, and the road passes through a very attractive country. For miles in succession the path leads through fine groves of camellia trees, which were covered with innumerable white flowers as we passed.

From Ping-shek onward the journey is by boat. Ten miles below that city we enter the Canton province again, at the head of the great pass which extends for thirty miles without a break. This pass is justly celebrated for its sublime and striking scenery. The high mountains on either side are covered to their tops with a heavy growth of timber, the bark huts of the woodmen being the only buildings seen for miles at a time. The river through the pass is one succession of rapids of a startling character, swift and steep, with ugly rocks rising in their course. The shooting of these rapids is most exciting, the light, shell-like boats going down them like the wind, turning deftly aside from the great rock in the midst, the water lashing their sides, while they incline almost to an angle of forty-five degrees in some of the steeper descents. We make no attempt to describe the wonders of this magnificent pass, which is unsurpassed by any in the province, but invite all to whom the journey is

possible to visit it before they leave China, and store their minds with the images of beauty and sublimity, of majesty and power, which the sight of it is sure to impress. ;

CHAPTER XI.

NAM-WA MONASTERY AND THE SIXTH PATRIARCH.



FROM U^shek, on the North River, a walk of ten miles brings us to the celebrated monastery of Naw-wa. The road winds among hills, some of which are steep and rocky, and thickly covered with trees. Many small villages are passed with groves of large pine trees behind them. It is November, the time of the second rice harvest, and the people are every where busy cutting the ripened grain. One man, who has fallen down in a chill by the roadside, unable to bear his load of rice any farther, excites our sympathy. Before the monastery is reached we cross five plains of rice, whose rental adds much to the annual income of the cloister.

As we are approaching one of the oldest, and, in former times, one of the most celebrated Buddhist institutions in China, it is interesting and useful to notice all that passes under our eyes, and to compare it with the past. Two special objects—a place and a man—must be kept in mind, as it is their conjunction which has given such wide fame to this historic institution. In reference to the place it is recorded that in the first year of the Emperor Teen-kam, about 502 A.D., a Sanskrit-speaking

priest, called in Chinese Sung-kau-no-lo-pat-tak; after having visited the old monastery in Canton, came in the course of his travels to Tso-kai, the little stream which rises in the Dog-Ear Ridge six miles to the east, and flows down past the monastery. As he drank of the water, he noticed its peculiarly delightful flavour, and said,

“This is in truth like the water of the western paradise. There must be a sacred spot here.”

Then looking at the clustering hills around he sighed, and exclaimed,

“Ah! this is a reflection of the Gemmy Forests of the western paradise!”

Calling the people of the neighbourhood together, he told them there would arise a famous Buddhist institution on the spot. Two years later the governor of the district opened a road to the place, and a small shrine was built, called Po-lam, “Gemmy Forest,” but it was not until a century and a half later that the prophecy was fulfilled.

Turning now to seek the man who brought fame to the place, we find him in the person of Luk-tsó, the sixth and last patriarch of the Buddhist Church in China. The founder of the Buddhist hierarchy in this empire is called Bodhidhasma, and is known in China as Tat-mo, which some believe to be the name of the Apostle Thomas, stolen by the Buddhists to represent their apostle. He came in the fourth century, and from him the headship of the Church was transmitted through a succession of patriarchs, the sacred vestments of their office consisting of a robe and a bowl. This line suddenly came to an end near the close of the seventh century, in the death of Luk-tsó, the sixth in succession from Tat-mo.

No one worthy to succeed him was found, and the sacred bowl and other paraphernalia of the office were buried with him.

The story of Luk-tsó's life reads so like a fairy tale, that it is difficult to sift the facts from the fancies which his admirers have wreathed around it. His family name was Ló, and his native village was Ló-tsuen, near the present city of San-hing, where he was born about 625 A.D. His mother's name was Lee. At the time of his conception she saw in a dream abundance of white flowers spring up and white storks flying in pairs, and the room was filled with a strange delightful perfume. At the time of his birth, which occurred six years later, bright candles appeared in the sky, and a wondrous fragrance filled the air. On the following morning two priests suddenly appeared, and informed his father that a son was born to him, whose name was already determined upon. Above it would be Wei (Benevolence), and below it would be Nang (Power), 'because he would bestow blessings on the people, and have power to show forth the doctrines of Buddha. He has ever been known as Wei-nang. In infancy he was nourished by spirits or divine beings, who gathered honeydew and nectar to feed him. When he was three years old his father died, and left him to the care of his mother, who brought him up. When she was old he went to live in Nam-hoi, near Canton. They were very poor, and he had nothing with which to support his mother. He was accustomed to gather firewood and take it to the market to sell. While there one day he heard some one read from a Buddhist book, called the "Diamond Sutra." His heart was awakened, and in answer to his inquiry the man told

him he had received the book from Wong-mui, the fifth patriarch, who was at Yan-tai monastery in Kiang-si province. He informed his mother of the desire of his heart, and went in search of this master. A stranger, hearing of his purpose, gave him ten taels (\$14), which he expended upon his mother, and set out to find Wong-mui. When he found him the master asked him,

"Whence have you come, and what do you wish?"

"I have come from Ling-nam," he said. "I am a native of San-chow, and wish to become a Buddhist."

"You are a Ling-nam man!" the master said. "Are the savages of that region worthy to become Buddhists?"

"The doctrines of Buddha know no distinction of north and south," replied Wei-nang.

He was taken on trial, and not only accepted as a pupil, but was judged worthy to receive the robe and bowl, which invested him as Wong-mui's successor and sixth patriarch of the Church, with the knowledge of things handed down from Tat-mo. When the time of his departure came, Ng-tsó, the fifth patriarch, escorted him to Ku-kiang in Kiang-si, and for several days did not return to his house. When his disciples saw him they wondered at his manner, and asked,

"Master, are you ill or are you angry?"

"I am ill," he said, "because my robe of office has gone to the south."

"Who took it?" they asked.

"Nang-ché" ("the powerful one") was the reply, and they knew who was meant. Shortly after this he passed quietly from the world.

Luk-tsó, after parting with his master and predecessor,

went south for two months, and crossed the great ridge. Several hundred men followed him, and tried to rob him of his bowl and robe. A priest called Wai-meng, of the family of Chan, who was also a military officer of the fourth rank, and very fierce in disposition, attempted to get possession of them. Luk-tsó, when hard pressed, threw them on a rock, saying,

"These are the emblems of our faith, why quarrel over them?" He then hid himself in the grass. The assailants tried to move the things from the rock, and, finding it impossible to do so, they called out to him,

"Traveller, traveller, open to us the law!"

He came forth and taught them.

After many such trials he came to Tsó-kai, where the small shrine of Pó-lam, though still in existence, had fallen into ruin. The people were ignorant of him and of his claims, but there was a priestess at the shrine called Mo-tsim-tsong, whom Luk-tsó heard repeating prayers. By explaining the doctrine he became known to her as a master. She told the people he was the great teacher who should come. They at once repaired the ruined Pó-lam, and gave it to Luk-tsó for a residence. He showed his merciful spirit in protecting the animals that were pursued by hunters and others, and in this way excited the anger of some evil men, who sought to take revenge on him. Failing to find him in their search, they set fire to the woods and grass, hoping in this way to destroy him; but he found a rock of a reddish colour with a large crevice, into which he fled, and escaped with his life. This rock, known as the Pi-nán-shek, or "Refuge Rock," is still pointed out two miles to the south of the monastery.

After remaining at Tsó-kai for a time, he continued his journey south, and came to Sz-ui, where he fell in with a band of hunters, who gave him charge of their nets, but he released all the birds and animals caught. Thence he went to Canton, where he proved his claims, and underwent tonsure at the foot of the "Knowledge Tree" (*Ficus religiosa*) in the old monastery in the north-west corner of the city, his hair being enshrined under an iron pagoda that remains to the present day. He remained in Canton for more than a year, and on his departure was escorted by a thousand disciples to Pó-lam, a distance of two hundred and fifty miles, where he became famous as a master, and drew around him thousands of disciples. He was a man of keen mind, much given to speculation, and was the founder of what is known in the history of Buddhism as the "Do Nothing" sect. They were opposed to idolatry, and held that everything was in the heart and mind, and gave themselves up to meditation. This school has continued under the name of its founder as the Wei-nang School. A rival of Luk-tsó wrote the following:—

"The body is like the knowledge tree,
The mind is like a mirror on its stand;
It should be constantly and carefully brushed,
Lest dust should be attracted to it."

Luk-tsó wrote in reply:—

"There is no such thing as a knowledge tree,
There is no such thing as a mirror stand,
There is nothing that has any real existence,
Then how can dust be attracted?"

The following specimen of Luk-tsó's reasoning occurs

in a sketch of his life from which the information here given is obtained. "Truth, or Reason, comes from the awakening of the heart, and is not gained by sitting still in indifference. The 'Sutra' says: 'If seen as coming, or sitting, or sleeping, it is evil.' It is not known whence it comes. It comes from nowhere, and it goes nowhere. The mind in which this principle resides is not subject to birth or destruction. . . . With reference to Dharma (the law) the aim is to see nothing in space, to believe it is empty silence. This is pure contemplation."

The Emperor Shan-ling sent a messenger with rich presents to inquire of him the principal points in his teaching, who, as he came, said,

"The Emperor's desire is that the priest should point out what is important in the mind, and instruct him in reference to the Great Void."

In answer Luk-tsó said, "Truth or Reason is neither light nor darkness; we only borrow these terms. Light and darkness may be without limit, or again, they may be limited; they are merely names applied to the unnameable. The 'Sutra' says, there is nothing with which Dharma (the law) can be compared, there is nothing with which it can be contrasted."

The messenger said, "Does not light symbolise wisdom, and darkness anxiety or care? Should not the man who observes Truth or Reason (meaning the path of metempsychosis) use wisdom and scatter care? How are the beginnings of life and death distinguished?"

Luk-tsó said, "Care is knowledge. They are not twins, yet they are not distinct. Wisdom enlightens care. There are two schools, called the 'Great' and the

'Small Conveyance.' According to the latter, deer, sheep, and other animals have a considerable degree of wisdom, but of a different kind from what man feels."

The patriarch said further, "Light is not light. Its nature is not dual. That which has no dual nature is said to be 'shat-liu,' 'real nature.' Those who have this real nature do not lessen what is foolish, nor increase what is sage. Living in care, they are not disturbed. Their nature is not shortened, nor continued. There is no coming nor going, nor yet remaining in the middle. As to what is internal or external to him, he is neither living nor destroyed; his nature is always the same, and continuing so to live without changing his character. This is to attain the true doctrine.

The messenger in tempting him inquired, "Master, you said that those who attain the true doctrine are neither living nor destroyed; how then do they differ from the heretics—that is, the unorthodox Buddhists?"

Luk-tsó replied, "The heretics say that destruction will end life, and life show forth destruction; destruction is, therefore, as it were, not destruction, and life said to be no life. I say of the living,—that is, the non-destroyed,—that originally they had no life, and that now, also, they have no power to be destroyed. If you would know the importance of mind, you must learn that the sum of good and bad which cannot be measured in thought, enters into the pure heart and body. Therefore, to be always in silence and contemplation, is the great object."

Thanking him for his instruction, and professing to be fully enlightened, the messenger departed for the capital, after having bestowed the gifts sent by the emperor.

which consisted of embroidered silk robes, five hundred rolls of fine silk cloth, each roll containing forty yards, and a magnificent jewelled bowl.

When Luk-tsó's followers increased so amazingly, he found the accommodations much too limited, and sent for Ch'an-a-sin, the original owner of the land surrounding the place, and asked him for more ground.

"How much do you wish?" said Chan-a-sin.

"Only space enough on which to spread out my mat," was the reply.

The request was granted, and as he put down his mat, it unrolled until it covered the whole mountain side and plain, and on each of the four corners sat one of the four princes of heaven (the Teen-wong, whose immense and frightful images stand at the entrance of Buddhist temples). A-sin saw in this an indication of the spread of the doctrine, and freely gave his land. He was honoured with a grave in the sacred enclosure, and a stone tablet to his memory, which is still shown. The land thus obtained covered two thousand English acres. Luk-tsó divided it into thirteen gardens, and gave special attention to the cultivation of fruits and flowers. The Nam-wa plums, the best that come to the Canton market, came originally from the orchards of this monastery.

After many years of success and renown in the Tso-kai, the patriarch went back to San-chow, and died in the Kwok-teen monastery, near his old home. A sharp contest arose as to which place should possess his body, and it was agreed that the matter be decided by the course which the smoke of an incense stick should take. As the smoke arose it inclined directly toward Tso-kai,

so he was taken there, and interred under the pagoda which remains as a mausoleum to his memory. His death occurred in the seventy-sixth year of his age, and the fifty-second of his priesthood. • He had told his friends that after he had been dead five or six years, 'some one would' come to steal his head, so they put iron bands around his neck, and wrapped it in lacquered cloth. The robe and bowl of his office were buried with him, together with the rich gifts of the Emperor Shan-ling. In the year 723 A.D., in the middle of the night, a noise was heard, as of some one breaking iron. All the priests rose in haste, greatly frightened, and saw a thief rush out of the pagoda, and, upon looking, they found Luk-tsó's neck mutilated, and his cloak torn. The thief was afterwards caught, and confessed that he was to receive twenty thousand pieces of gold from another monastery for bringing Luk-tsó's head. He was condemned to death, but through the mercy of the Church was pardoned.

After his death Luk-tsó became a Bôdhisattva, a real flesh-and-bones idol. His body remained incorruptible, and was enshrined as the chief object of worship in the temple. For many centuries this was one of the most celebrated shrines in the empire. In the T'ang dynasty, about the eighth and ninth centuries, it saw its greatest prosperity. It has been visited by numberless celebrities, scholars, poets, statesmen, travellers, and devotees. All praise it extravagantly in verse and prose monographs. One of the Ming emperors gave ten thousand taels to repair it. Among the most distinguished visitors to the shrine was the poet-statesman, Suotung-po, of the

twelfth century, who was strongly imbued with Buddhistic sentiments. His high appreciation was expressed in the words, "One drop of Tso-kai water would overflow the four streams and eight cataracts," referring to the spread and prevalence of Buddhistic teachings. The tower of the two sages was built in honour of his visit and that of another eminent scholar. In later times the priests became a dissolute set, and sold off much of the land to pay for their debaucheries and luxurious style of living.

This ancient shrine, remote from the usual course of travel, has been visited by but few from the outside world, only three white men, as far as can be learned, having trodden the historic spot, so that a description of it as it appears at present may prove of interest. As we crossed the rice plain that surrounds the site and the renowned stream of Tso-kai, which, as no bridge was found, was waded, we came upon fine groves, composed chiefly of camphor and liquid-amber trees of great size and stateliness. Within the grove were many buildings, and everywhere appeared signs of former splendour. The outer entrance is through a lofty gateway, over whose portal are the words "Tso-kai." This leads us into an avenue thirty yards wide and a thousand yards long, enclosed by high walls, at the end of which we come to another and more elaborate gateway, over which, in a richly-ornamented frame, are the words "Po-lam" (Gemmy Forest). This inscription, executed at great expense, is a recent addition, having been presented a few years ago by the three highest officials in the Prefecture. Beyond this is another space en-

closed by walls, which is thirty yards wide and one hundred and fifty yards long, leading up to a still grander and more imposing portal, over which, on an oblong tablet, is the inscription, "The Illustrious Monastery of Nam-wa." Passing under this, we enter a square court in front of a large hall, in which an image of the Laughing Buddha is enshrined with colossal images of the four princes of heaven. In a second storey is the hall of the Five Hundred Arhans, or Disciples, with images of each. Flanking this main hall, to the right is a tower, in which hangs a great bell over four thousand pounds in weight. It is never rung, and a notice, forbidding any one to touch it, informs us that if the bell should ring the place would be burned. A great drum tower formerly stood facing this bell tower on the opposite side, but only the ruins of its foundation remain.

Beyond this set of buildings is another square court facing the "Precious Hall of Great Heroes," in which are images of the Three Precious Ones, with their usual attendants. To the right of this hall a path leads to the ruins of some very extensive buildings. The outline shown amid the debris of broken walls and tangled shrubs indicates immense size, and a great iron cauldron, six feet in diameter and of still greater depth, points to the time when hundreds and thousands gathered in these halls. The space once occupied by these buildings was thickly overgrown with trees, thorny shrubs, and jungle grass. Immediately behind the hall of the Three Precious Ones is an elaborate gateway, a comparatively recent structure, with the inscription "Tai kok mun," "the Great Percep-

tion Gate." To the right of this is a peculiar iron pagoda of great age. It is about twelve feet high, divided into five stories, and entirely covered with little images of Buddha, the whole protected by a wooden pavilion. It is called the "Kong-lung tap," the "Descending Dragon Pagoda;" and the story of the place is, that formerly there was a pool in this spot from which a dragon was wont to issue at times, making a great disturbance. Luk-tsó addressed it one day, saying.

"You can make yourself large, but I challenge you to make yourself small. If you are able, let me see you become so small that I can dip you up in my bowl." The dragon, unaware of what the consequence might be, contracted himself into a form no larger than a lizard. Luk-tsó then dipped him up in his bowl, and as he did so the dragon became powerless. His scales and bones dropped from him, but by the mercy of Luk-tsó he was permitted to ascend to the sky, under promise that he would never return to disturb this place. The little iron pagoda was then built to keep him in subjection. It dates from the seventh century, and is one of the oldest structures in the land.

The next hall is that of the patriarchs, whose succession is traced back thirty-three generations, presumably to Shak-ya-mûni himself. One shrine in the hall is specially dedicated to the Five Patriarchs of the Church in China. To the right of this hall is a large five-storeyed pagoda, where Luk-tsó was first buried. Over the entrance are the words "Fa-chung-hôi," "The flower will continue to open." For over a thousand years it has stood, the mausoleum of the sixth patriarch. Immediately behind

it, we come to the great sight of all, the hall where the incorruptible body of Luk-tsó is enshrined. After much knocking we are admitted and taken into the main hall, where banners and inscriptions innumerable are suspended from the wall, or hung upon frames in the room. And in the centre of the hall, in a cabinet raised on a high platform, are the mummied remains of the patriarch held in such sacred esteem. A few priests and others are in attendance, but for a long time they refused us even a glimpse of the image. Having received the assurance that we are clean, having bathed and washed our clothes, a point in which we certainly had the better of them, they open a kind of lattice door, behind which still hangs a curtain, and try to convince us that a lamp inside is the object we seek. In the dim light we are at first deceived, but repeated examination soon shows the fraud attempted. By clearing away some gilt frames and incense burners, and climbing unceremoniously upon the altar, we can see him plainly enough. A black mummied face, covered with lacquer to preserve it, the features still distinct, appears above a scarlet silk robe. We wish to enter the shrine, which is in the form of a cabinet, and make a closer examination of the body, but are not permitted. We are told that none but priests who have prepared themselves by long fasting can enter the shrine. If any one else attempts to do so sickness and death are sure to overtake him as a punishment for his presumption and sacrilege. The story is told us of an official from the adjoining district who was sceptical as to its being a true body, and insisted upon entering the shrine to satisfy himself. He was seized with a

painful illness, which resulted in death before he could reach his home.

We are in the presence of the most popular idol in the whole country about us. The people have implicit confidence in his power and beneficence. He is the protecting genius of the district, and on the occasion of drought is carried out in procession to the city of Shiu-kwan, and special sacrifices offered to secure his intercession that rain may come. In the history of Shiu-kwan are frequent accounts of these processions and the propitious answers obtained. A few years ago, however, he was carried in procession to Shiu-kwan and back for this purpose, but no rain came. The ceremony was repeated, but without result. The people began to doubt and demand some explanation, and the priests, fearing for the reputation of their shrine, published a manifesto, in which they said that Luk-tsó was subject to Sheung-tai, and could only intercede with Him. This being the name for God used by the missionaries there, full advantage was taken of the incident to urge the people to believe in the all-powerful God.

With the exception of this hall, the whole place has an air of desertion and decay. Its glory is a thing of the past. Although Luk-tsó will continue to receive the worship of the people, yet the influence of this monastery, like that of many others, can never again be great in the land. Many spots rendered sacred by their association with the patriarch are shown. The Pai-shek, to the north of the monastery, is pointed out as the place where Luk-tsó was accustomed to worship Buddha, the print of his knees, it is said, still remaining. The Tso-

shek, or "Stone Seat," is also shown where he was wont to sit in meditation, the marks of his sitting being visible, it is said. The "Refuge Rock," and the site of many of the older buildings, of which no less than twenty-seven are enumerated in the histories, are pointed out. Of the thirteen gardens laid out by Luk-tsó only a small portion remains. The plums have been introduced into the neighbouring orchards, and are extensively cultivated. The grove at the back of the monastery is a jungle, which we did not attempt to penetrate. •

From Nam-wa it is twenty miles out to Shiu-kwan. The road leads over hills and rice plains. The chief town on the way is Ma-pa, marked by a peculiar rocky hill with a cave near the top. It is called Saddle Hill, from its shape. A large stockade stands near the town as a place of refuge, and several striking hills in the neighbourhood give variety to the landscape.

CHAPTER XII.

TAN-HA, OR THE RED CLOUD MOUNTAIN.



REPORTS of the rare and striking scenes that await the traveller among the Tan-ha Mountains, forty miles north-east of Shiu-kwan, had met us from time to time, and fired us with the desire to see that wonderful group of hills. Three ways of reaching the place were open to us. The first was to march directly across the country to the monastery on the main cliff, a heavy, continuous tramp, that was likely to prove too fatiguing for mere pleasure. The second way was to go by boat to the mouth of the Yan-fa stream, and thence by smaller craft up the picturesque valley, to the nearest point on the water, a mile distant from the mountain to be ascended. This would involve a three or four days' journey and many discomforts. The third way, and the one we adopted, was to send a boat ahead to Chow-teen, the nearest landing-place on the main stream, there to await our coming, and walk the twenty-six miles to that point, spend the night in the boat, and ascend the hill the following day.

Leaving Shiu-kwan in the early morning, we crossed by the ferry to the south side of the river, and were soon among the hills. Five miles brought us into an extensive

coal region. Hill after hill had been mined, and the surface supply exhausted. Most of them had been abandoned. The coal was conveyed down shoots and in baskets to the river near by, whence it was carried in barges to the cities further south. On the level space at the foot and on the hillsides were small villages, where the miners lived. The coal produced is of a poor quality, the difficulty here, as elsewhere, being to obtain proper machinery for draining the mines. Several of the mines are owned by Mr. Hue, whom we visited in Shiu-kwan, and he is very anxious to procure proper machinery. In one place, in addition to the coal mines, we found a large dye manufactory. Many of the hills we passed were covered with camellia trees (*Camellia olifera*), which made a fine show. In the lowlands by the river were large fields of pea-nuts, in which scores of men, with oxen, harrows, and other implements, were busy digging the ripened crop. The first step was to cut away the tops, which are spread out and dried, to be used as fuel by the people; then the ground was thoroughly loosened by harrows, men sitting on them to keep them in the ground. After this they would dig up the nuts with hooks, and finally shovel up the ground, and pass it through a sieve to be sure that none were left. The pea-nut-sifter is a peculiar but simple affair, being a rough frame of two bamboos, which slope to the ground, on which a coarse bamboo sieve is placed, and rocked from side to side, as a man slowly shovels into it the mixture of earth and pea-nuts. In other places the sweet potatoe crop was being gathered. They would first plough open the long rows, and then gather them in heaps. There were some fine speci-

mens, both of the yellow and purple varieties among those we saw turned out. The people carry their fowls in baskets to the fields, where they feast on the insects which swarm over the freshly-dug soil.

One small stream of very clear water was crossed in a ferry boat. Inspiring views of the hills kept us from feeling the fatigue of the march. Chief among the objects of interest passed were the Ng-ma-tow, "The Five Horses' Heads," a peculiar group of hills that change their appearance continually as observed from different points of view, until we come directly behind them, when they stand out like mighty colossal steeds, arranged as the equestrian guards of the land. On three sides they are almost perpendicular, the fourth sloping down toward the plain, while the conformation of the sides opposite the slope is such as to suggest the name. They are all of red sandstone. Many other massive hills of the same material were passed. In some places large deposits of rich conglomerate were seen, a small pass cut out through the hills showing a great variety in the composition and colouring of the mass of conglomerate rock on either side. Some polished specimens made a most attractive show as seats and stone doorways. The geology of this section is exceedingly interesting, especially as contrasted with the limestone of the districts further west.

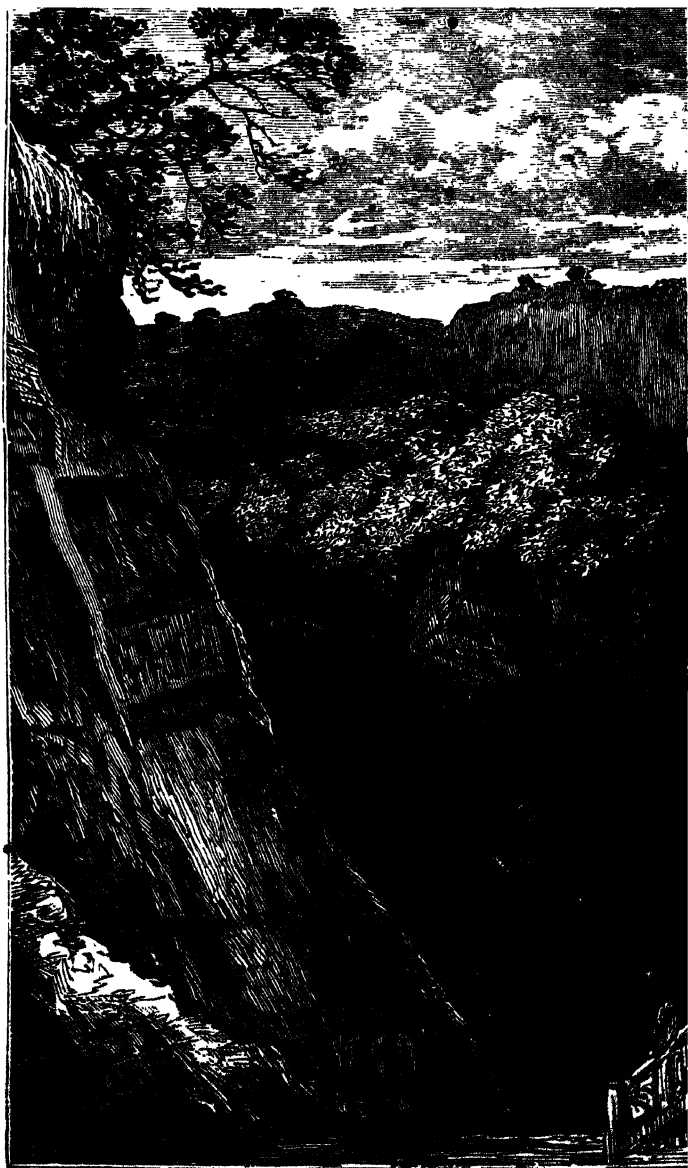
Having passed Ping-po-sz, the residence of a small mandarin, we soon come to Chow-teen, where our boat is anchored in a quiet place opposite high walls of rock, which send back ringing echoes in answer to our calls. We have still twelve miles to travel before we reach the famous cliff of Tan-ha. Being invigorated by a good

night's rest, we engage mountain chairs and coolies, and start directly inland from the river. We are soon in sight of the peculiar hills that form this most striking mountain group. They stand forth in every imaginable shape and position. Two appear like the lofty square towers of some giant fortress as we approach, but which, from another point of view, present a dome-like shape, with minarets rising around. Another pair are joined at the base, but rise separately to a great height, like the posts of some colossal gateway. One immense cliff, called the "Tortoise Head," changes its shape with every angle of vision. They are all of sandstone, the prevailing hue being red, but their sides often show surfaces of many colours. One, which juts out conspicuously, has the various formations most clearly marked on its perpendicular face. The top was somewhat conical, the rock composing it being partially disintegrated, and covered with vegetation for about two hundred feet. Below this came a succession of various strata, as distinct and clean in appearance as though freshly cut. The first was a layer of red sandstone one hundred and fifty feet thick, then a layer of lead-coloured conglomerate, perhaps ten feet in diameter, next a layer of sandstone, and below this another layer of lead-coloured conglomerate. Below this came a layer of light-red sandstone twenty feet thick, and underneath a layer of the same conglomerate, followed by another of red sandstone. Next came a very thick layer of conglomerate, with a layer of red sandstone twenty feet thick below it, and underneath this a very thick layer of conglomerate, with red sandstone below. Eleven distinct strata are thus most clearly marked, covering about three

hundred feet of the perpendicular way. As we look at it, we seem to be gazing upon some freshly-chiselled wall, and not upon one that has stood for thousands of years, its face unstained by the tears of the ages. Below and above the formation was discoloured, and partially covered by shrubs and vines.

The road we follow leads us within a mile of Tan-ha, which is absolutely inaccessible from this side, so that it required a journey of five miles around the immense mass before a place to ascend could be found. This rear side was not quite perpendicular, but very steep, with out-lying domes and pillars. Two domes of almost perfect shape, which jut out from the side, and a deep ravine, down which a stream of water pours, are seen on the lower portion, while several caverns, utterly inaccessible, appear near the top. Half a mile beyond this rear end of the great Tan-ha wedge is an immense dome-shaped hill, very high. Of softer formation, its top has been worn out by the action of the weather until it resembles a cup. Through groves of camellia and a jungly growth of various shrubs, with the ever-changing panorama of striking hills before us, we follow our winding path until we reach the open country on the western side. A vast semicircle of hills confronts us, through which the Yan-fa stream flows in its sinuous course, washing the foot of massy a steep precipice, but showing no space for a road along its banks.

From the outer boundary of this semicircle it is three miles into the hill and monastery of Tan-ha, the path leading over successive ridges. In the first line the hills show no rocks, but are covered with graceful pines, while



PATH LEADING TO GATE OF TAN-HA MONASTERY.

the inner circles are composed of rocky cliffs, with little patches of vegetation. Over several steep and rocky hills we pass, through narrow rock-bound passages, whose walls are thickly covered with ferns, chiritaæ, and various flowering plants, until we come in full sight of the great Tan-ha cliff. It is of pure red sandstone, and is the most remarkable hill in one of the most remarkable groups I have ever seen. It rises like a wedge, standing almost perpendicular on its long side, to a height of fifteen hundred feet, the only way of ascent being up one of its narrow ends. It is about a mile long and one-third of a mile wide, being wider in places at the top than at the bottom. The side on which we approach shows a sheer precipice of over a thousand feet, the middle portion of which is absolutely bare, with broad bands of vari-coloured rock marking the different strata. Nearer the base, the surface, though steep, is damp, and slightly corrugated with holding ground for vegetation, ferns, cacti, and other plants clinging to its sides. In the upper portion the face of the cliff is broken into small ledges, with trees upon them, while the top is covered with a good growth of pines and other trees.

A narrow valley, overgrown with shrubs and rank grass, lies between Tan-ha and the adjoining hills. From this valley a flight of steps leads up to the first ledge, three hundred feet high. This ledge at the end we enter is broad enough to furnish space for a bamboo grove, but becomes narrower as we advance, until only the thread of a path remains, and this leads into caverns in the cliff side, which extend for half a mile. At the entrance of these caverns is the site of the first monastery, established

in the thirteenth century. These caves are called the Kam-shek-ngain, "Embroidered Rock Caves;" so named from the appearance of the rocks on the face of the cliff above, which are in broad bands of lighter and darker red, as fresh and distinct as though they had been painted yesterday, their exposure to the storms of ages not having changed the natural colours of the strata.

From early times, the records say, monks and devotees had visited and sighed over this place, marked, as they thought, by Nature for some special purpose, but no shrine had been built. In the time of the fourth Sung dynasty, in the thirteenth century, a monk named Fat-wan first saw these wonders. He climbed the ledge, explored the caves, gazed on the great sand-stone stripes of the mighty wall, and sighed over so propitious a site left unused. "In dreams I have seen this place," he said, "but now for the first time behold it." He built a small shrine in the cave with a little door at the mouth. Soon after four adjoining caverns, in form like halls or temples, were occupied, the "Grotto of the Thousand Sages." To these, in the course of time, were added the "Founder's Grotto," the "Crouching Tiger Grotto," and the "Dragon King Cave." On the face of the rock are two enormous characters, "Kam-shek," "Embroidered Rocks," engraved over six hundred years ago. The Chinese say that the colour of these rocks changes with the seasons, the red being of a deeper and more vivid hue in spring, and of a lighter colour in the autumn, which may be accounted for by the presence of more or less dampness at these times. Scholars and poets in great numbers have visited the place, and dwelt upon its wonders in

extravagant terms. On the outer verge of the narrow ledge in front of these caves, which overlooks a sheer precipice, a line of stone balustrades affords protection. Springs of clear, sweet water are found in these rocky caverns. The shrines are all deserted now, and the various structures falling into ruin.

Retracing our steps we reach the valley again, and going half a mile further up we come to a line of stone steps leading up the hill. The path we enter comes up from the river over a small hill, under gateways, with inscriptions, and then ascends the steep. Five hundred stone steps laid in a winding stairway make the ascent an easy matter. Noble trees line the way and overhang the stone path, among which we note some especially fine castanopsis, covered with abundance of ripe nuts, which the natives gather in quantities and use for food. Examination of these trees, by specimens here collected, shows them to be of a new species not hitherto known, but now described as *Castanopsis jocunda*. Among the smaller shrubs appears an oak, which produces large acorns, extensively used for food. It is a magnificent plant with broad, woolly leaves, and new to the scientific world, being now known as *Quercus uvariifolia*.

As we ascend the stone pathway widens, and the striking combination of mountain scenes becomes more evident. On a broad shelf of rock we find the monastery, before the door of which the words "Tan-ha," in colossal proportions, are inscribed on the red sandstone wall, a fringe of cactus growing on the narrow ledge above them. The views from the resting-place outside the gate are simply enchanting. It is impossible to describe the in-



TAN-HA MONASTERY.

finite variety of form and colour seen in the surrounding peaks. To the right a path leads under the projecting rocks, but some end on the verge of deep, precipitous ravines, into which we can look, over the tops of tall trees growing far down in its depths, while across its narrow chasm rise the steep and thickly-wooded slopes of the neighbouring cliffs. A few steps from the gate bring us to the monastery, which was formerly crowded with priests and worshippers. Grouped on this ledge a thousand feet above the plain, the various shrines and temples were admirably located. Some that remain are several storeys high, and from their windows, courts, and verandahs the scenes spread out are wondrous in their variety and beauty. Within the radius of a few miles are more than a hundred striking peaks of all shapes, all covered or crowned with vegetation. Among them wanders the little stream, with its boats slowly creeping up, sometimes flowing under the base of steep cliffs, and again through narrow gorges, or skirting the little meadows. One single pillar, apparently six feet square, roughly hewn, rises over a hundred feet entirely alone—like the tall chimney of some factory destroyed by fire. Other larger ones are of the same shape, some with caves and precipices, and each clothed on its rounded summit, with an evergreen crown of vegetation. The sandstone on most of them shows marks of deep corrosion.

This monastery, formerly so popular as a shrine and a resort for the lovers of nature, is now in decay, and its various buildings falling in pieces. Only two years ago one of the main halls was destroyed by fire, ignited in the explosion of fireworks used in worship. The views from

Mo-li-teen are perhaps the finest to be obtained. The monks at this place are most obliging, providing fair accommodation for visitors, and allowing them the greatest freedom. No more enchanting mountain retreat in which to escape the heat of summer could be found. The elevation is sufficient to secure a cool atmosphere, the arrangement of the buildings is such as to afford light and general comfort, the supply of good water is un-failing, and the constant inspiration of the wondrous mountain scenes on every hand rests and renews the mind. The visitor, however, is not content to pause at the point now reached, but is anxious to explore the great sandstone wedge still further. Beyond the halls that crowd this shelf of rock we find a path leading to the summit of the hill, where much of interest awaits the daring climber. The ascent is made by two flights of steps cut in the rocky wall of the cliff. To go up the first is an easy matter. The path leads through a cavern in the rocks, open at the top like a funnel, through the upper end of which the sky is seen. On the wall is an inscription which reads, "A stairway through to heaven." The narrow strip of light is called "Yat-seen-teen" (A single thread of sky). Emerging from this peculiar passage way, we come to a small terrace covered with trees, at the extremity of which begins the second flight, that leads to the top of the mountain.

To ascend this height is a most formidable task. The steps cut out of the rock are shallow and much worn. An iron chain, but insecurely fastened, lies along the face of the rock for support, and a hundred feet of sheer precipice must be climbed to reach the top. The first



VIEW FROM THE VERANDAH OF THE MONASTERY.

few steps are easy enough to make, but as they turn diagonally up the steep, the traveller soon finds himself directly over the brink of a precipice more than a thousand feet high. The rock is perfectly bare; not even a shrub or bunch of grass appears to break the smoothness of the awful descent. Below, the boats and men on the little river appear like children's toys, and there is nothing to relieve the eye as we look down the giddy height. When I reached the point at which this frightful precipice, with all its deadly possibilities, was first seen, there came with sudden and vivid outline the vision of wife and children, and the utter folly of attempting this ascent with no higher motive than a love of adventure and desire to explore the summit was impressed upon me so strongly, that I called out to my friend, who was a few steps ahead, saying, "I am not going up." It was not physical fear, but a feeling that I had no right to incur the risk of such an adventure, when the slightest misstep meant certain destruction. I was surprised at the readiness with which my friend retraced his steps, and the look of relief that came over his face as he turned and said, "All right, I don't wish to go up."

The terrifying character of the ascent did not force itself upon me fully until he described to me the coming down. A little wooden gateway stands at the top where the steps end, and leads into a path that is closely lined by trees and shrubs. Coming down this pathway, nothing of what is before you is seen until you reach this gateway, where, as you step to the door, you suddenly find yourself looking down a sheer precipice of twelve hundred feet, with nothing to break the fall. It

is enough to try the strongest nerves. The first sensation is a recoil from the awful brink, and an instinctive searching for some other way of descent, but there is no escape. Approaching the doorway again, you see that the iron chain stops short five or six steps below, and that these, slanting diagonally across the precipice, must be made without any support in the face of that tremendous descent. My friend, who had been to the top several times, and is a man of strong nerve, vividly described his sensation as the necessity for going down faced him. His desire to escape those frightful steps was so great, that, to use his own words, if the choice had lain between a hand-to-hand conflict with a tiger and making that descent, he would have chosen the former. Fancy yourself standing with one foot over the verge of that awful precipice, and to be compelled to descend it with the knowledge that the merest slip would hurl you over the brink to be dashed into a thousand pieces. I had seen enough in the ten steps I had taken to satisfy me, and for several nights after my journey I found myself rolling over precipices, clinging to smooth rocks, and grasping iron chains that would not hold. The feeling excited on the first ascent of this height sometimes wears off, and of the three white men who have made the ascent, the one who was most seriously affected in his first coming down, being so overcome that his companion had to guide and steady his feet, placing them firmly on the steps until he reached the iron chain, lost this nervous dread, so that during his stay at the monastery he could go up every day to the summit. I also saw Chinese coolies carry their burdens up these steps, the baskets

suspended from their shoulders overhanging the precipitous cliffs as they went up.

A Chinese writer, Liu-in, a man of fine scholarship and good style, both as a writer of travels and poetry, gives an account of his visit to Tan-ha, and his ascent of this hill. He describes the effect of the boats on the river, seen from the heights, as they appear near at hand, and again afar off. He spent the night at the mouth of the little river, and came in the morning to a pool at the foot of the hill called the "Fong-shang Pool" (Release Life Pool); so named because fishes, turtle, etc., were purchased at the market by devotees, brought to this place, and released. It is now overgrown, and the site uncertain. He was much impressed by the semicircle of hills, and thought it a grand stronghold, in which an army might entrench itself without fear of being dislodged. He describes the winding path and the fine views from the monastery, whence he went by the narrow path through the "Thread of Skylight." His ascent to the top is graphically told, and the various objects of interest on the summit dwelt upon; the Double Mirror Pool, the She-li-táp, "Self-Destruction Tower," on the highest point; the Purple Jade Tower, the Snow Grotto, etc. He describes the peaks as appearing in different colours when seen from higher or lower points of view—in the morning or in the evening, from near or distant points, when the sky is clear, or through the mists that rise. He spent the night on the summit, and gives a charming picture of the many-hued shades of evening gathering over the peak, and darting into the caverns and grottoes, and among the groves. His account of the descent is vivid and to the

point. "Be sure," he says, "your one foot is securely placed before you move the other, and grasp firmly the iron chain. It is much easier to go up than to go down, because in going up your face is to the wall, and, not seeing the precipice, you feel no fear, but in going down you have to look before you."

The summit of this great wedge of sandstone is a mile long and a third of a mile wide. It is thickly covered with trees, and must present many attractions, both in itself and in the views of the surrounding peaks obtained. The place was first brought into notice as the refuge of two men named Lee, who fled from the north on account of some trouble in the time of the Ming dynasty, and entrenched themselves in this inaccessible retreat. They left the place to a priest named Chim-kwai, who founded the monastery, and whose grave is now on the summit. It has been a refuge for fugitives from time to time, and offers peculiar advantages as a place of safety. It would require weeks to explore this region thoroughly, and its study would amply reward the student of geology and botany. It is unique in the composition of its rocks. All the other striking mountain groups in the province are of limestone or granite formation, but this is of pure sandstone, thrown up in such a wonderful variety of shapes as to rival the limestone peaks of Lien-chow. They differ from other sandstone hills in being covered with profuse vegetation, in the midst of which many new and beautiful species of rare plants are found.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE STONE PORTAL AND THE FALLING BROOK.



AMONG the numerous streams that converge toward the provincial city, is one that flows almost directly from the north, which, though smaller than most of the others, brings us more quickly into attractive country, where lines of hills shut out the dull monotony of the lower plains, and leave us in undisturbed enjoyment of an upland country of great variety and beauty. This stream is known under two designations,—as the Tsung-fa River, so named from the district where it takes its rise; and the Sau-k'ai, or Falling-Brook River, because of the rapid character of its upper section.

Its general course is somewhat west of south for one hundred miles, that is, until within fifteen miles of the city, when it sweeps around a sharp curve, and thenceforth flows south-east, until its clear waters commingle with the turbid floods of the Pearl River. In the long, narrow boats specially adapted to the conditions of the river, which abounds in shallow water and has numerous dams, we make fair progress from day to day. After twelve miles' sail we come to the first point of interest, the Shek-

mun," or "Stone Portal," which is, as the name indicates, a rocky gateway in the line of hills through which the water finds a passage. Above and below the river expands into broad sheets, but the rocky barriers of the pass contract its stream into very narrow limits as it presses through the rough portals. The "Sunset Afterglow" at Shek-mun is regarded as one of the "Eight Lions," or great sights of Canton, and is certainly worthy of all the praise that has been lavished upon it. The afterglow of one of the gorgeous sunsets which sometimes occur in this latitude produces a wonderful effect upon the placid water. It has been my good fortune to see at this point one of these brilliant displays, and the effect was beautiful in the extreme. Looking to the west through the narrow gate of the pass, all the magnificence of the clouds was mirrored in the glassy waters, the effect being heightened by the high range of hills in the distance, behind which the sun was setting. All the surroundings were in perfect harmony with the magnificent spectacle. The broad stretches of shining water, the line of purple hills in the distant west, the descending sun seen through the narrow walls of the pass, the groves of graceful trees, the boats slowly drifting with the current, and even the unsightly town on the banks, receiving its dying splendours, all harmonised with wondrous effect. And as the banks of clouds to the west took on their matchless tints, the afterglow threw its enchanting mantle of most delicate and gorgeous colours, orange, roseate, purple, green, and gold, in marvellous combination, blending in infinite variety of shades, back to the east, touching with living light the lower hills and

higher peaks of the White Cloud range, and tinging all with most exquisite hues. All this lavish beauty, changing every instant, was reflected with wonderful faithfulness in the clear depths of the smooth water, making a picture only too quickly dissolved.

Native taste appreciates the attractive features of this spot, and many pictures of it may be seen in the houses and shops in Canton. Native poets have sung its charms, and artists portrayed them with varying success. By the side of the "Stone Portal" is the little monastery of Sai-wa, in which these lines are written:—

"Between the cliffs asunder rent
The water flows in deep current ;
At sunrise, or at day's decline,
The bordering hills in glory shine."

Another in the same strain, sings—

"The light that shines on Shek-mun's waves,
Its hills with after glory laves."

The memory of the exquisite sunset at the Stone Portal, however, is somewhat marred by an experience that came to me just above that point. Contrary to express stipulation, the boat crew on this occasion turned out to be inveterate opium-smokers to a man. So addicted to the habit were they, that they would stop their work at short intervals through the day to indulge, and, when darkness approached, so intense became their craving for the opium pipe, that instead of running half an hour longer to reach a safe and comfortable anchorage, they put down their poles on the spot, in an open, exposed place, and refused to go a rod further.

It was almost high tide, and we were close to the shore in the shallow water, covering a long stretch of mud and sand, and the wind, which soon rose to a gale, blew us still further on the shore. In the morning our position was anything but enviable. The tide had receded, and left us high and dry, with a hundred yards of slimy mud between us and the water. The boatmen, to do them justice, when they saw the situation, did their best to release the craft, and called others to assist them, but all was of no avail. We were fixed for the day. The next high tide would not occur until four o'clock in the afternoon, and there was nothing to do but to wait. Between us and the shore was an impassable slough of soft mud, in which the boatmen, in trying to find a way to the shore, sank knee-deep at every step. We were exposed to the full force of a furious wind, which called every available article of clothing into requisition to keep us warm.

We were the laughing-stock of all the boats that passed up and down the river through the day, and were constantly hailed with such questions as, "What made you go on the shore to anchor?" "What important business have you on that mud bank?" "Who was your pilot into such a fine harbour?" "Hope you enjoy your breezy situation!" etc. As the opium-pipe was the immediate cause of our discomfort, I determined to make it the means of bringing relief if possible. Capturing their opium lamp I concealed it, promising to restore it as soon as they should get the boat afloat. They stood the deprivation for an hour or two, but soon came begging for the lamp. I told them to get

the boat off, and they should have their lamp forthwith. They returned in a short time shivering, cringing, kowtowing, and begging most piteously for it, saying they would die if they did not get it, and without their opium they were too weak to work, or to do anything toward getting the boat off. After this was repeated several times, I saw that it was useless to hold out, and returned the lamp to them. In less time than it takes to write this, they were down in the bottom of the boat, in the damp, musty hold, inhaling the stupefying fumes, that soon rendered them oblivious to all outward cares.

As the day wore on the tide began to rise. Anxiously we watched it, as inch by inch it crept nearer to us. It came within three feet of the boat, the spray from the little wavelets sprinkling the sides, and we thought that in half an hour more our suspense would be ended, and we afloat again. But there it stopped, like the cup of Tantalus, and, remaining stationary for a few minutes, began to recede. We were in despair. The tide had failed us! It was too late to send for help. The captain, however, assured us that the night would be higher than the day tide, and with this doubtful assurance we prepared to spend another night at our unique anchorage. Charging the boatmen to keep faithful watch that the propitious moment might not pass unheeded, we retired. Sleep came but lightly to our eyes, and every change within and without was quickly noticed. In the fourth watch we felt the welcome sensation of the boat moving to the force of the incoming tide. Instantly I aroused the boatmen, not one of whom was on the watch, and had much difficulty in shaking

them out of their opium stupor in time to push the boat off into the deeper water. I told them to go on to the anchorage above and make the boat secure, but they refused; and pushing out into the middle of the stream, they cast two small anchors, and went back to their opium.

Waking from a brief doze, I felt a peculiar rocking motion in the boat, and looking out saw that we were drifting before the wind. As before, it took some time to arouse the boatmen, and when we began to look about, we found ourselves in a strange place, with both anchors gone, and the boat drifting helplessly we knew not whither. With difficulty they succeeded in pulling the boat to the shore, where we made fast, and awaited the morning, which showed us that we had been swept down several miles into a branch of the main stream, and in a few minutes more, would have been dashed against the rocky sides of a dam. It took several hours to recover the distance we had lost.

Keeping a straight course west past the towns of Woshun and Kam-kai, we came in sight of the little island of Kam-shan (Golden Hill). It was formerly called Ling-chow, and the shape of the rocky base was such as led the people, who always delight in the marvellous, to say that it was upborne by the Great Fish, a mythical creature which figures in Chinese cosmogony. It is a rocky and picturesque island, that rises abruptly in the midst of the river. In former ages the main stream of the North River flowed down past this point and thence through the narrow pass of the "Stone Portal." This was the route of the early expeditions to the south, and the way by which officials came from and returned to the

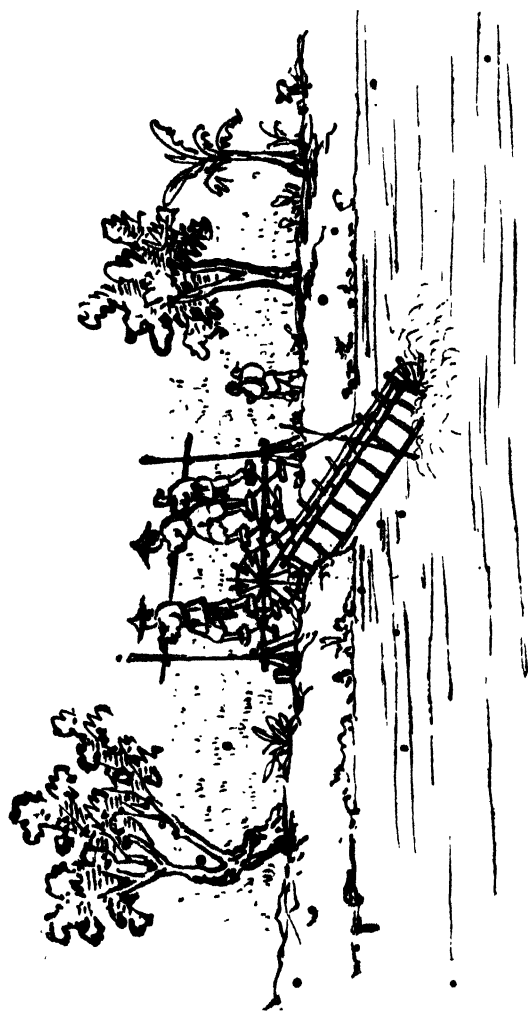
capital. In the course of years the deposits of sand impeded the flow of the water, and the construction of the Shek-kok barriers at the point of division. Some thirty miles north effectually turned the main stream into its present course. In the olden times, as the traveller descended the river, the rocky barrier of Ling-chow was the first object to attract his attention as he approached the city. Its peculiar situation and appearance suggested the notion that it was held firm in its position in the midst of the waters by some sea monster. Some fancied they could see a resemblance to those mythical creatures in the shape of the foundation rocks. It was supposed to stand over the geomantic pulse, and its position at the apex of the great delta augured well for the district commanded by it. One of the early apostles of geomancy, Kwok-pok, visited the place in the third century of our era, long before the country had been settled to any extent, and predicted its future wealth and prosperity, and the literary and political renown which many of its inhabitants should attain. One writer says: "The best influences of the country south of the ridge, which centre in the provincial city, begin to be manifested at Ling-chow, and thence are freely distributed until they culminate in Hoi-chü, literally the Sea Pearl, a rocky islet immediately in front of the city of Canton, and known to foreigners under the less poetical name of "Dutch Folly." The little island, with its fine groves, its tree-covered hill, the ancient monastery of Po-toh-tsz, the broken ranges of hill to the north, and the broad plains to the east and south, mark this as a spot of unusual attractiveness. It is called little Kam-shan to distinguish.

it from its greater namesake on the Yang-tsz River. The half-ruinous condition of the buildings* adds to the picturesque beauty of the scene. It is a favourite anchoring place for fishing-boats, whose gathering is referred to in the rhyme:—

“By night from Kam-shan's shrine the bell's clear music floats,
By night shines forth the red glare of the fishing-boats.”

From this point streams branch out to the south-west, through the busy mart of Koon-iu, to the west, through plains of sugar-cane and rice, to Lo-pow, an important town on the North River, and north-west, in the course of the old channel. Following the latter, we enter a hilly country, where broad fields of rice surround the bare hills. Near the town of Tam-po two prominent peaks face each other on opposite sides of the river, and on the summit of each stands a pagoda. These pagodas present a peculiar appearance as we ascend the stream, suggesting the form of a cat's head, with the ears erect. The native eye has caught the resemblance, and given the name Mow-tow-shan (Cat's head Hill) to the place. Pak-nai, forty miles from Canton, is the limit of navigation on this stream, whence a postage road, fourteen miles in length, leads to Shek-kok, an important town on the North River.

Retracing our steps, we find that three miles beyond Shok-mun the river makes a sharp bend to the right, and passing around the eastern extremity of a line of low hills, enters its own peculiar country—a country of quiet, rural beauty. The broad plain that opens before us is enclosed on the east by the range of hills of which the White Cloud group is the southern terminal; and on the west by a



ENDLESS CHAIN PUMP.

range that runs through the La district, and forms the watershed between this and the streams to the west. To the north rise the higher hills of Tsing-ün, and east of them the picturesque range in which our river takes its rise. The valley through which it flows in a winding course is full of varied attractiveness. The bamboo groves that line the river, the pine-clad hills further back, the grove-embowered villages, the neat and well-tilled farms, with evident signs of prosperity, make a picture of rural comfort and plenty most pleasing to the eye.

The river, originally shallow and rapid, has been improved by dams, which serve the double purpose of irrigating the fields, and confining the water into convenient channels for navigation. We are informed, on good authority, that one hundred and thirty-seven of these dams cross the river from the city of Tsing-fa downward. They are all built on the same general plan. A line of pine piles is driven in diagonally across the river, with an opening ten or twelve feet wide for the passage of boats, while at the lower extremity are set immense waterwheels, with endless series of bamboo cups, which pour the water into a trough that conveys it to the fields. The dams are often built at short distances apart, with the mouths on opposite sides of the river, so that in threading the winding channel the boats must take a zig-zag course, not infrequently descending in order to ascend again. The height over which the water descends is from two to three feet, and in two places nearly four. One of the steepest on the river is the first we encounter on the way up.

I have occasion to remember this dam, as I spent a

night suspended over it. It was when coming down with the crew of opium-smokers. The captain was steering, and failing to see the proper opening of the dam, he sent the boat, with all the force of the swift current, upon the projecting piles at the side, the bow extending ten feet over, while the stern lay in the water above, and the rushing current strove to twist the boat around and drive the piles up through the bottom, in which case all would have been lost. The position was peculiar, not to say perilous, but the captain complacently assured me that we blocked up the way, so that boats could neither go up nor down without first helping us off. Before long the market boats began to descend. The first that approached inquired the state of things, and believing the statement of our men, made fast above, and did not attempt to come down. The next that came was more persevering, and cautiously feeling its way down, found that there was room enough to pass over the dam without touching us. As it swept easily down the men called out in no very complimentary language to the boat above to follow their example, which it did. Thus our hope of help from that source was gone, and all night long we remained there, with the rushing cataract on the one side, six large waterwheels in full swing, creaking fearfully as they rolled round, on the other, and the market boats going down with a shout beside us. Fortunately the hulk of our boat was strong enough to resist the unusual pressure, so that morning found us safe, and with the help of three additional boat crews we were pulled off, and went on our way rejoicing.

Besides these waterwheels, the people supply their

fields with water by means of endless chain pumps, a most convenient arrangement, by which water can be pumped up to almost any height. The pumps, which are portable, consist of an oblong box, in which a continuous chain of wooden paddles passes over pulleys at either end, connected with a treadle above, which two men work easily with their feet, a temporary shed, or large umbrella, protecting them from the sun, as they pour an endless stream into the trench prepared to receive it. In dry weather scores of these may be seen along the banks of the stream, turning incessant streams of fresh water into the thirsty fields. If the banks are high, two or more are placed above each other, with temporary trenches dug to connect them. The same pumps are used to drain the fish ponds, from which the rich mud accumulated is annually taken to enrich their fields. When the waterwheels and pumps fail to carry a sufficient supply of water, resort is had to deep wells. All over the fields may be seen old-fashioned wellsweeps, an upright post, on which is swung a cross-beam, weighted with stones and turf at one end, and holding the bucket on the other.

Along the river, as we ascend, are many market towns, where the people gather in large numbers every fifth day, and back from the river the plain is thickly covered with villages, many of them very populous. In one of the central towns, Chuk-hu, the Presbyterian Mission has a small chapel, from which a large section of country is conveniently reached. After sixty miles of winding through the lower section of the valley, the whole way agreeably broken by charming bits of rural scenery, green hills

and groves of trees interspersed, the hills become more numerous and striking, covered, as they are, with vegetation in many places. The fruit orchards are not the least attractive feature in the landscape. Groves of plane trees, with snow-white blossoms, send volumes of fragrance down the valley in the early spring. The olive trees excel in their magnificent proportions and symmetrical shapes, the most conspicuous being those opposite the market town of Shek-kok. The lichee is the most plentiful, in many places covering the river slopes of the lower hills, forming extensive and densely-shaded tracts. The trees grow in a most compact form, the thick rounded branches almost touching the ground in places. The delicate pink of the young leaves and the strawberry-like fruit hanging in delicious clusters are most effective in giving beauty to the landscape. Besides, there are the pomeloes, usually growing singly or in ~~groups of~~ several, their large white blossoms filling the air with a rich fragrance, and the large ornamental fruit hanging like immense lumps of gold among the green leaves. The hills, too, are covered with a great variety of wild flowering plants, azaleas, myrtles, roses, melastomas, etc.

Leaving hamlets of less note behind us, we pass the large villages of Yeung-tsün and Pán-u, which face each other on opposite banks of the river,—the latter celebrated for the capture of a tiger a few years ago, whose skin is carried in triumphal procession on the feast days of the gods,—and come to the little market town of Tai-ping-cheung. Ascending the steep red clay bluff, we call at the London Mission Chapel, and are politely received

by the assistants in charge. Thence onward, through an ever-changing series of upland scenes, we pass Kwai-tsui, picturesquely situated on a peculiar cliff that projects into the river in a way to suggest its name, "Tortoise Lip." Loh-kong and Shan-kong are marked by the fine wooded hills that rise behind each respectively.

At the foot of the last hill that conceals the city of Tsung-fa a prominent pagoda rises from a grove of trees, which were bright with the budding freshness of spring when we passed, while just beyond is a fine stone bridge composed of great granite slabs supported by fifteen piers, spanning the little stream. The district city is small and insignificant, but a large and prosperous trade centres in the important town of Kai-hou, half a mile to the east. It is the outlet of a broad, fertile, and populous plain that stretches to the east and north. The London Mission has a flourishing station at this place, and a few miles to the east, in the village of Shek-hang, is a native Baptist Church, which, after a stormy beginning, seems to have settled down to a quiet, prosperous course.

From this point the river becomes very narrow and difficult to travel as it flows down from the higher mountain regions. A journey of twenty miles in the small shell-like boats that traverse its upper course unfolds a wonderful succession of mountain views. Wooded hills, lofty cliffs, and, in one place, springs of hot water, are seen. Leung-how-teen is the last town on this side, a postage road leading over the rough mountain from that point to Lung-mun on the other side.

CHAPTER XIV.

AMONG THE HILLS IN CENTRAL CANTON.



FROM Kai-hau northward the road for ten miles is a broad and pleasant wheelbarrow path, running between fertile fields under perfect cultivation. Broad fields of sugar-cane, pea-nuts, taro, rice, barley, peas, beans, squashes, and many other crops flourishing in the rich soil show that the husbandman labours not in vain. For several miles our eyes have been watching a slight depression in the line of hills, which develops as we approach into a narrow defile, through which the road passes over the mountains, rising gradually for five miles on the south side, and making the descent in two miles on the north side, the highest point attained being about one thousand feet above the plain. In the ascent on the south side the path follows the course of a picturesque mountain stream, which almost at the very entrance treats us to the delightful view of several cascades falling with artistic grace over rocky precipices. The first of these, about twenty feet high, falls into a circular basin, deep and clear, where a barrier of rock hems it closely around, except a small opening on one side, whence the water escapes to flow down another fall into a pool of irregular

shape, and thence over shelving rocks into the ordinary bed of the mountain brook, rushing noisily around boulders that obstruct its way, and scattering perpetual showers of refreshing moisture over the ferns and grasses that hang affectionately over its sides.

The defile is called "The Gorge of the Dragon Pool." At the head of the highest fall is an altar, erected on the spot that commands the most extensive view of the low lands stretching for leagues to the south. Offerings at this altar are supposed to propitiate the presiding divinity, who is credited with power for good or evil over the fertile plain which he so effectively surveys from his lofty point of look-out. Our path continues up the precipitous sides of the narrow defile, with the little stream, a hundred feet and more beneath us, flowing alternately in quiet dignity through deep pools and rock-bound channels, or in noisy dashing down rapids and cataracts, and around the grotesque rocks and boulders that rise in its course. The along a part of its course are like a piece of solid masonry, the strata of rock being laid horizontally, like great blocks cut out for some massive building with jutting points and parapets, as though designed by hand. Several incense mills have utilised the water power by turning them into small ducts, and leading it to pour its strength into their overshot wheels, which direct a set of tilt-hammers that crush into powder the dried branches and leaves of certain fragrant shrubs that grow on the hillsides adjoining. Smaller gorges open into the main defile, presenting a variety of mountain views that more than compensate for the fatigue of the ascent.

A tramp of four miles up the ascending grade brings

us to a mountain inn, the only one in the pass. It occupies a well-selected site, where several valleys converge. Below it stretches the winding course of the stream we have followed; to the west rises a group of well-wooded hills, one especially conspicuous for the fine grove of noble trees that have escaped the woodman's axe. Immediately in front of the inn are two beautiful liquid-amber trees, backed by a fine old pine, which gives an air of grace and refinement to the place. But the inn itself! Perhaps the less said about it the better. It is a one-storeyed structure, about twelve by eighteen feet in dimension, with no windows, and a single narrow door. There are two beds, with covers you shrink from touching, and shudder as you see your own bedding laid upon them, and hurriedly command it to be removed before anything adheres. Two rude fireplaces, and before them two great heaps of ashes, kept in the house lest ~~less~~ should destroy their fertilising qualities, a heap of conglomerate rubbish, and an unspeakable loft, complete the general view of the interior. In the absence of the regular inn-keeper, a gruff old party (a stonemason, as we afterwards learned) left in charge growls out a negative to all questions about beds, provisions, and general necessities. Happily provided with all that is needful, our supper is soon prepared, and with appetite sharpened by a walk of twenty miles, we eat with stoical indifference to the surroundings. Our attendants also manage to find the rice jar, and some doubtful-looking wisps of dried salt greens, which they appropriate.

As soon as darkness falls we spread our beds, some boards from the loft being made to do duty in the space

before the door. We have scarcely fallen into the first doze, however, when a loud knocking at the door calls forth emphatic growls from our quasi-host, and we are entertained by the following dialogue:—

Caller. "Open the door."

Host. "I can't."

C. "You must."

H. "There is a bed against it."

C. "Take it away."

H. "The men are asleep."

C. "So early? Wake them up."

H. "What do you want?"

C. "I want to see your strange guest."

H. "How do you know we have a strange guest?"

C. "Some men who were passing told it in the village."

The bed is moved back at last, and the door opened. A man comes in with noisy greeting, which is met with emphatic but suppressed disapprobation. I lie still under the cover, listening to some original remarks upon shoes and various articles of wearing apparel. A light is thrust over my face in spite of the host's remonstrances and sharp rebuke, for such a gross breach of propriety in prying into people's privacy. The intruder having satisfied his curiosity sums up the result of his observations in the remark, "Humph! it is only a foreign devil," and takes his departure.

Sleep comes as sweet and refreshing in the dingiest, dirtiest inn as in the most palatial hotel, as we proved on this occasion; and soon after the first rays of light found their way through the glass tiles in the roof, we arose with

a feeling of renewed strength and vigour. I had breakfast served on the lid of a travelling basket under the graceful branches of the liquid-amber trees, and was the object of great curiosity to the dozen or more rustics from the neighbouring villages, who came with the earliest dawn to see the stranger. When breakfast was ready they were quietly reminded that good manners required them to withdraw while the guest was eating. They withdrew as requested, but from around the corners and the doorway kept a close watch upon all the proceedings. After breakfast I invited them near, and had a long and friendly conversation, winning their good-will to such an extent that they pressed me to remain several days with them and explore their mountain possessions. The leading man, a cross-eyed teacher, was especially agreeable, and displayed considerable intelligence on subjects of general interest. I found them to be a colony of Hakkas, the name of their settlement being the San-hoi-tung, the "Newly-opened Ravine," and under their skilful and economical management the valleys, long bare and fruitless, are becoming attractive as well as productive.

Through all the region traversed on this journey I found that the Puntis, or native Cantonese, occupy most of the plains and level arable land, while the Hakkas are taking possession of the upper and less accessible valleys. Wherever they settle they plant fruit and other trees, and the place begins at once to assume a thrifty, prosperous look. This occupation of the valleys is only the first step towards expansion over the adjoining plains. They are a frugal, thrifty, persevering race, and as farmers and labourers excel the Puntis, whom they are sure to

supplant. I declined the cordial invitation of these mountain people, urging lack of time. The usual examination of my hair, clothes, shoes, etc., was submitted to, one of them naïvely remarking that my shoes were not made of iron as the visitor at the inn the night before had given them to understand, and another asking me to give some proof to them that I could see seven feet down into the earth, saying it was the general belief among them that foreigners could see as far into the solid earth as Chinamen could into clear water. Unable to gratify them on this point I took leave of them. The hotel bill, which included supper and breakfast for my four Chinese attendants, lodging, and the best bed for myself, with lights and other necessities, reached the surprising sum of twenty-two cents, and a smile of pleasure actually spread over the stonemason's face as the money was placed in his hands.

Two miles' further travel up a somewhat steeper ascent brought us to the top of the ridge, about one thousand feet above the plain. The walk through the upper hills in the early morning was most enjoyable. The mists still lay in the valleys like banks of fleecy snow, and the hills rose up wondrously fresh and green by contrast. As we ascended the higher slopes the common Chinese pine (*Pinus sinensis*), which is the chief source of the firewood, and furnishes the tough, elastic timber used in the hulks of boats, and which was almost the only tree seen on the lower hills, is intermingled with, and in some places quite supplanted by, the finer pine (*Cunninghamia sinensis*), which produces the beautiful smooth-grained timber so extensively used

by builders and carpenters. Its stiff, regular shape and clearly-defined outlines, give a peculiar charm to the hillside covered with it. From the height of the dividing ridge the view is most extensive and varied, stretching to the south as far as the eye can reach over broad plains with their teeming villages. To the east and west the flanks of the ridges, through a depression in which we have ascended, hem us in, but to the north the space extends over successive plains for many miles to the high mountain region beyond. We are on the line of division between the Tsung-fa and Tsing-ün districts. We see the little streams trickling down on opposite sides of the hills, their waters destined to follow widely separate routes, and reach outlets far remote from each other. A plain granite stone marks the line of separation between the two districts.

On the slope of one of the upper hills a grave was pointed out, whose propitious location, it was said, had brought the highest literary honour to the family of its occupant, a senior wrangler having been produced after twenty years. The geomantic influences of the place may be very efficacious, but are certainly rather hard to manage, if it takes twenty years to concentrate them sufficiently to produce one senior wrangler in a large clan that numbers its literary men by scores.

The descent on the Tsing-ün side is very rapid, and from many points on the way we get excellent views of the unfrequented valley, in the midst of which stands my friend's native hamlet, and which he is careful to point out from time to time. Deep ravines open from the path with masses of tangled vegetation covering the little

streams that trickle down them. A fine waterfall hard by the path descends forty or fifty feet over the rock, adding much to the attractiveness of the scene. We stop to rest where the path crosses the mountain stream, under a fine-spreading tree. This tree is revered as a god, and worship paid to it by the passers-by. A tablet, with inscriptions descriptive of its virtues, was placed on some rocks at its foot, until sacrilegious hands, in hope of finding the silver or other precious substance that was supposed to give it such virtue, dug away the earth, removed the stones, and destroyed the altar. °

After a few miles' walk we are in my friend's village, and crowds of friends and acquaintances press around him with eager questions, of which I am the chief object. He answers them all to their evident satisfaction. He places his house at my disposal for several days, but his generosity certainly exceeds his means of entertainment, and his heart is larger than his house. The small clay-cottage contains but two rooms, one of which is occupied by his mother, a gentle, refined-looking old lady, and the other is filled, except for a small space about the door, with farming implements and household utensils, so that there is scarcely room to turn around. A glance is sufficient to show that his offer of hospitality, however sincere, has been made without due consideration of the space at his disposal, and I immediately decide to proceed to the market town five miles below, where a boat for temporary residence can easily be procured. A small stream flows past the village, and a little open boat is soon in readiness to take us down. We are in a district not previously visited by foreigners, and I become, in

consequence, an object of unbounded curiosity. The news of my arrival has spread from hamlet to hamlet with astonishing rapidity, and as the little boat sweeps down the creek, on every rising knoll and at every crossing stands a crowd of eager gazers intent upon getting some glimpse of the stranger, many calling to the boatmen to go more slowly that they may see the better.

Just before reaching the market town of Tong-t'ong, which is to be our headquarters during our stay in the district, we come to the first, and, in many respects, the chief object of interest in the whole neighbourhood, the great "boiling spring." It is situated about fifty yards from the creek, and is of an irregular shape, being about thirty feet long by ten feet wide and four or five feet deep in the centre. A little to the west of the large spring is a smaller one circular in shape, and about four feet in diameter. The hot springs well up from the bottom, which is covered with a fine whitish sand, and break forth in bubbles on the surface. The water is boiling hot, its high temperature being tested by some eggs which are placed in it, and which in several minutes were sufficiently boiled for our use. A thick cloud of vapour rises from the water continually, being seen from a considerable distance, and this vapour is heavily charged with sulphuretted hydrogen, and we are almost suffocated by this offensive gas when the wind blows it in our faces. I was unable to determine anything as to its chemical or medicinal qualities. The sulphureous gas seems not to mingle with the water, but to be dissipated as soon as it reaches the air. The spring is a great boon to the large village adjacent, which takes its name Tong-

t'ong, meaning "Soup-pond," or perhaps simply, "Hot-water-pond," from this wonderful spring.

The great volume of heated water which issues from it continually flows into a ditch, whence it is conveyed into the adjoining fields, with no observable effect other than that produced by ordinary water. When the ditches are sufficiently irrigated the water is turned off towards the creek. Quantities of the water are carried daily to the houses for domestic use, and at times scores of village dames and maidens may be seen with baskets of clothes, which they wash by the side of the spring. The abundance of swine's bristles, dogs' hair, and feathers scattered along the margin show that it is extensively used in the less poetical work of butchering pigs, dogs, chickens, etc. Many stories are told of accidents that have happened here; of cattle forced into the boiling water, and being immediately overcome, and other equally suggestive tales. On one occasion some young men from a theatrical troupe, having imbibed too freely of "Sam-shu," proposed, as an act of bravado, to wade across the hot spring. Two of them made the attempt, but were no sooner in the water when they lost all power of movement, and before help could reach them were scalded to death. The natives believe that underneath the spring is some precious substance which they call a "fire pearl," and that if this were removed the water would cease to boil. They looked with some suspicion on my examination of the spring, fearing that I might discover and remove the precious pearl, and rob them of their wonderful spring.

Soon after leaving the hot spring we reach T'ong-t'ong

market, situated at the junction of three small streams, the Kat-ho, the Wong-fa, and the Wang-tung, which here unite to form the Pa-kong River; and while waiting for the larger boat, which is to be our temporary abiding place, are surrounded by a dense crowd of spectators. Although our boat lies in the middle of the stream, the water is shallow enough to allow the ever-increasing throngs to surround us without any serious inconvenience to themselves. We quietly endure their persistent inspection for several hours, not detecting any special signs of hostility, but are informed afterwards that the young men of Tong-tong, who are a rough set, several hundreds in number, were seriously planning an attack. Some of them urged that with their numbers it would be a very easy matter to make away with this single foreigner and loot his baggage, and no one be any the wiser for it. No one in Canton need know how or where he disappeared. Others were not sure of being able to dispose of the "barbarian" so easily, saying that he no doubt had arms concealed that would prove most destructive if used, and spoke of a mysterious weapon that, shot upwards, would send missiles to great distances if need be, which would fall in unexpected places, and exploding, destroy men and houses. Their plotting was overheard by some men from my friend's village, who generously became my champions, and assured them that any attack on me would not only be heard of quickly in Canton, but that they and their whole clan would take my part, an old feud existing between the villages making them all the more ready to resist the Tong-tong roughs. In this way the matter blew over, while I remained unconscious alike of

the plots of enemies and the championship of unknown friends. At length a comfortable boat was found, and we were relieved from the hot sun and prying crowds. Sending my card and two betel-nuts to the local constable, I received a call from him, and every assurance of his protection. My friend quietly mentioned the hostile demonstrations of the afternoon, and urged him to special vigilance.

From Tong-t'ong as the centre, several excursions were made to places of interest. The first was through the great Temple Pass to the town of Shek-kok, and the little city of Fat-kong, a distance of fourteen miles. Securing two stout coolies and a mountain chair, the distance was rapidly traversed, the coolies going at a swinging gait, nearly six miles an hour. The way leads along the front of Tong-t'ong village, the largest in the plain, with a fine grove of chestnuts, oaks, camphor, and other trees behind it. On the right the boiling spring sends up clouds of vapour, and the water being turned into the fields, full half an acre of the black soil is enveloped in steam as the heated water percolates through it. We cross several fine streams, sometimes on rustic bridges, again by shallow fords.

In places the road lies between hedges of rose trees, covered with white and fragrant flowers. Pear trees in bloom deck the landscape here and there, and liquid-amber trees, in the delicate freshness of their new leaves, reminding one of the maple trees at home, give a peculiar charm to the picture. These trees, so chaste and stately, are to me the best emblems of grace and dignity. The hillsides are covered with flowers, chiefly the *Raphiolepis*

indica, a showy little shrub when in bloom, with its white flowers tinged with the faintest touch of pink, but in no way conspicuous when the flowers are gone. Groves of camphor trees, sending forth new shoots, and many groups of pines, arranged mostly in sets of three, abound.



• A TRIAD OF PINES

I must have seen nearly a score of these triads of pines, noble specimens of their kind, each with a little altar at its foot with signs of recent worship. Numerous and attractive valleys open upon either side as we pass, making us regret the shortness of the time that compels us to pass them with only a brief glance. • • • • •

About half the distance is passed, when we reach the largest of the three streams that unite at Tong-tong. It is called the "River of Good Luck," and is a clear, rapid stream of sweet water. We cross it below a sharp bend, and going a few hundred yards through an ever-green tunnel—a deeply-cut path covered over completely by shrubs and vines—come to the river again, which has flowed nearly a mile around the curve to accomplish the same distance. Two miles further on we enter the Great Temple Pass, which is about one mile long, the hills at the lower extremity being high and precipitous. The stream winds in two long curves through the pass, falling near the centre over some rapids, which prove a serious obstacle to navigation, the crews of three boats being necessary to pull one up. The hills along the pass are quite aglow with rhododendrons, scarlet and lavender, covering the slopes with their attractive colours. Near the head of the pass is a large temple, where a grand celebration is held every five years in honour of the river deities, that the River of Good Luck may not fail to meet the expectations which its name naturally awakens. An attractive grove of trees covers the hills opposite the temple, and just above a deep and picturesque valley opens in the ridge of hills against which the temple is built. Crossing the river again, we strike across more level country, and passing through several large villages, and a peculiar temple, with a diagonal doorway, called the "Field-protecting Temple," are soon at the important market town of Shek-kok, which is the head of navigation for all boats and the centre of trade for a large district.

We meet with a good reception from the people, and dispose of a large number of books, but absolutely fail to find anything fit to eat. We are on the dividing line, or rather the place of admixture, between the Hakkas and Puntis. The population is about equally divided at this point, while to the east the people are all Hakka, and to the west most of them are Puntis; but the Hakkas are pushing westward, and are found in greater or less numbers in all the mountain valleys and less accessible regions. One mile from Shek-^akok is the military post of Fat-kong, which has had an interesting and at times a bloody history. It is a very small place, enclosed by a circular wall with only one gate. Inside is nothing but Government buildings, a college, and quarters for some troops. A few years ago the people rose up in rebellion, deposed the officer, and locked him up in his little city. It would have gone hard with him if relief had not come from Canton in time, and three thousand Tung-kun braves broke up the siege and released the magistrate. As a consequence of this escapade, several hundreds of those concerned lost their heads. Fat-kong is on a plain with high mountains to the north and south. To the south the high ridge is somewhat broken. To the north is a fine ridge full two thousand feet above the plain, in which is a celebrated fortress, called the Kun-yam-chai, where not long ago a band of one thousand robbers fortified themselves, and carried on a predatory war upon the valleys below.

On the return to Tong-tong in the afternoon, the various places of interest were reviewed in the reverse order, the completed picture in most instances being

more attractive than the partial or fragmentary view had been.

The next day was occupied in an excursion to the Wong-fa-shek-chai, a rocky fortress fifteen miles to the east. For the first three miles we retraversed the path of the previous day, and after that followed the course of the small stream called Wong-fa creek. The hedges covered with white roses, the isolated pine trees, standing singly or in groups of three, the abundance of wild flora, and the great variety of cultivated plants, pass quickly as we hurry on in our slender seat, suspended from bamboo poles on the shoulders of the robust coolies. Five miles of this rapid travel brings us to the entrance of a fine pass in the hills, called the "Wong-fa Gorge." It extends for eight miles without a break. The stream that flows through it is small, and its course blocked up in many places by immense granite boulders. About one-third of the way up these great masses of rock are so placed as to form convenient piers for a fine bridge across the stream, the timbers being morticed into the natural rocks, and made secure by braces fastened from one to the other.

It is a relief when the coolies call a halt, and ask me to walk over a part of the rough path. The hills on the south side are of a different formation from those on the north, the latter being more smooth and regular, while the former are steep and precipitous, with numerous projections and deeply-cut ravines running down to the river. In places the whole mountain side is covered with mosses and festoons of a vinrig (*Delima sarmentosa*), the rough leaves of which are used in polishing metal. It

flowers in full clusters of delicate white blossoms, of a peculiarly pleasant fragrance, sweetening the whole valley with their perfume.

Several waterfalls of fine proportions pour over the cliffs, sometimes almost deluging the narrow footpath. The chief of these flows down a narrow ravine, and is not seen on the way up until we are somewhat past it, when, turning around, its fine sheet, falling a hundred feet and more down the steep rock, flashes like a fairy picture before us. A little further is a narrow gorge not more than sixty yards across, with steep, shrub-covered walls and a stream of clearest water flowing down. Up the gorge a pathway leads through a gateway in the rock to some villages in the valleys beyond. A mile further, and another fall of fifty feet comes down in a slender stream like strands of silver laid against the black rock of the cliff. On the opposite side the hills become more thickly covered with trees, and down a narrow ravine a noisy brook comes pouring, leaping over a high precipice near the river. Just beyond this point, on the south side, our path passes over the top of a waterfall which must make it perilous crossing when the water is high. Near the head of the pass the hills converge, and the stream flows in a deep channel only a few feet wide between solid rocks. The water, chafing under the restraints of these narrow limits, has worn many bowls, and wells, and mortar-shaped holes. Stones forced by the constant motion of the water around these indentations have eroded the hard, iron-like rock, and left these strange shapes as witnesses of their action.

Emerging from this pass, we enter the Wong-fa valley,

where six or seven small villages in fine positions comprise the population. Here, as in the upper valleys of the Lien-chow River, the people suffer from goitre. We proceed at once to the village at the foot of the fortified hill, and make inquiries about the ascent. No one will act as our guide, being suspicious of our motives in seeking the place. After receiving various evasive answers, and some that were entirely misleading, we determine to find the way for ourselves. It is a steep, hot climb, the hill is bare, and the path uncertain, but getting clear of the lower hills we see the fortress rise full before us. It is a great mass of columnal rock, rising like an immense pile of masonry high above all the surrounding hills. It was used as a fortress from early times, and was one of the last places to yield in the struggles at the close of the Ming dynasty. A brave garrison, formed of intrepid spirits that refused to submit to the Manchu rule, gathered in its caverns, carrying their treasures with them. Being in communication with the surrounding peasantry, who secretly supplied them with provisions, they were able to make a long and stubborn resistance. The fates, however, were against them, and at last, overcome by want of food, they were compelled to surrender. Their treasures of gold and silver, with ornaments of jade and pearl, are still believed to be buried somewhere in the caves of this rocky peak. Many attempts have been made to find and appropriate them, all of which have proved signal failures.

Popular superstition surrounds the place with supernatural beings, probably spirits of the departed heroes,

who keep faithful watch over their precious treasures deposited centuries ago. Vague stories are told of persons hardy enough to enter the inner caves and seize the gold or silver; but they were not left in peaceful enjoyment of it. The wrath of the spirits followed them, and painful sickness seized them, dizziness, nausea, and other evils prostrated them, until the treasure was returned or used in sacrifices to the spirits. I have a shrewd suspicion that some of the Chinese friends who accompanied me had a vague hope that I might find the treasure for them. With the power of looking several feet into the earth, attributed to foreigners, they supposed that I could easily detect it, even though carefully buried away. If such hopes inspired them they were sadly disappointed. No trace of buried treasure appeared, nor any signs of the guardian spirits, though one of the men saw a large water-spider, or lizard, which he thought might be one of the goblins, detailed to keep watch.

The peak, which seems a solid mass of rock, contains three caves, the largest and most important being near the top, the entrance toward it on the north. It is called the Sam-po-fong, "Bride Chamber," and also the Nü-tsz-fong, the "Maiden Boudoir." The interior rudely resembles a Chinese house, with the reception-room, table, chairs, and small rooms leading off. The natural resemblance, if any existed, has no doubt been increased by artificial means. From this main chamber an interior passage leads to the next cave, called the Lo-tsz-ngam, or "Cormorant Cave," which has also an outer opening lower down the hill. It is a low, damp place,

with nothing to attract one. The other cave is still smaller, and all have pools of water, fed by constant dripping from the roof. The fortress is now entirely deserted, and scarcely any signs of its ever having been occupied remain. From time to time it has been the resort of bands of outlaws, but it is not convenient enough to serve their purposes except when driven to desperation. Its use in former times accounts for the excellent road up the pass, which the people of the valley find to their interest to keep in good repair.

Returning to the village at the foot of the hill, we find the people quite changed in their manner. Assured of our good intentions, they are all friendliness, and urge me to remain several days in their valley, promising to explore the fortress more thoroughly with me, and to show the way to some other places of interest. Their offer of hospitality, however, comes too late, so I have to decline and hasten back to the boat.

The two following days are spent among the people in the market towns and villages adjacent, where abundant opportunities are given them to see and hear the foreigner, and supply themselves with the books he carries. I receive more civility than rudeness, and leave them with a more favourable opinion of the people than previous report would have led me to form.

Leaving the fine old hills with their gorges, fortresses, and waterfalls, we go slowly down the river, turning back continually toward the lofty peaks that are receding farther and farther to the east. Prominent among them stands the Wong-fa fortress, its bristling pinnacles sharply defined against the sky. To the south of it stretches

the "Five Peak Range." There are, in fact, ten peaks distinctly outlined, but five stand out above the rest, and give the ridge its name. As we descend, the river becomes less attractive; the hills recede, and become small and barren. The Sabbath is spent at Kwan-tsin, a large market town noted for its flies and its pork, but showing quite a stoical indifference to me and my books. It is the residence of the township officer. Towards evening a strange procession is seen entering the town and proceeding to the mandarin's yamen. There are about two hundred men armed with old muskets and spears, and carrying peculiar, triangular flags, black, with white-and-red borders. Near the head of the procession a man in fetters is carried in a chair. It transpires that this is a thief caught in the act of robbing a house, and the whole village have turned out to carry him to the yamen, where, by the loss of his head, he will soon pay the penalty of his crime. They are all armed to prevent a rescue by the man's own village, which proves to be no other than the redoubtable T'ong-t'ong previously mentioned.

From Kwán-tsin onward the river flows between low banks, and over nearly one hundred dams before the North River is reached. Immense flocks of geese feed on the meadows and along the stream. They are a large breed, not infrequently weighing five catties when full-grown. For the last six miles, the river is a dreary, sluggish, ditch-like stream, and it is with a feeling of relief that we escape from it into the broad North River, which we enter at the head of the famous Tsing-ün Pass. Immediately we are in the midst of a grand defile in the

mountains, six miles in extent. The river flows in a deep, clear stream, between lines of lofty hills. The charms of this pass culminate in the middle of its course, where the hills on either side rise in fair wooded slopes, those on the north extending to a height of nearly eighteen hundred feet above the water, those on the south being somewhat lower.

CHAPTER XV.

FROM THE WHITE CLOUD HILLS TO THE DRAGON GATE.



TURNING our faces eastward from the City of Rams, the peaks of the White Cloud Hills meet our eyes. Lying but a few miles from the city, their sides, summits, and ravines have been traversed by myriads of feet, and have inspired the poetic fancies of numberless writers in the past. They have been studied from every point of view, in every shade of light, and in all the aspects of natural, geomantic, or religious interest, and their various points of attraction have been continuously recognised as among the great sights of the city and vicinity. The evening view of White Cloud has for centuries attracted the lovers of natural beauty. The appearance of these hills seen through the purpling light of evening is ever an inspiring sight; but in the centuries past the effect was no doubt greatly heightened by the trees that covered their sides, smoothing the rough outlines, and adding both dignity and variety to the scene. The favourite points of view are from the towers and pavilions on the wall, and from well-selected spots to the east of the city. The charming picture presented merits all the praise it has received. The various peaks and

ravines, with their temples and grottoes clothed in the rich hues which evening spreads over them, are fascinating to the beholder. We find this couplet attached to a native description of the scene—

“ The footprints left, the fame of fairy Ching prolong,
But White Clouds evening view for nine years claims our song.”

The ravines are filled with monasteries, both Buddhists and Taoists having large institutions here, in which visitors and devotees may be entertained. These shady retreats, with the clear water from living springs flowing down, have always been favourite resorts for pleasure-seekers, and many a party from Canton has made the excursion in sedan chairs, spent the day in the charming ravines, and returned in the evening. The path leads along the steep hillside, and on one occasion, as a party was returning, the ladies in their chairs and the gentlemen beside them, a flock of water buffaloes, feeding on the slope above, became enraged, and one of them made a rush at the chair in which a lady was riding. This brute, as is the habit of his tribe, closed his eyes when he made the charge, and for this reason miscalculated the distance, so that the chair had passed the point aimed at before he reached it, and as the consequence he pitched headlong with tremendous force over the steep bank, breaking his neck in the fall, and sending a thrill of horror through the party as they saw what might have resulted had he struck the chair.

The monastery of King-tai, now in ruins, was the largest and finest on the hills a few centuries ago; and among the sights of the time, that of the monks retiring

to King-tai was given a high place. There was an upper and a lower establishment, with from three to four hundred priests in connection with them. These priests were sent out to solicit alms, or repeat prayers in the city or villages adjacent, and in the evening would return to their cloister. It was the picture of these monks on their return, in companies of ten or a score, wending their way up the path, laid with stone steps, their peculiar dress and air of priestly devotion, set off by the surrounding groves, in the deepening shades of evening, that attracted attention. The simple outlines of the picture are most suggestive, awaking, as they do, a train of poetic fancies in the mind of the observer. The poet Wong-tung-ngai calls attention to the scene in the lines—

“Incline the head, and backward view the forms that come,
The clouds descend and join to escort the bonzes home.”

To this another rhymester adds the couplet:—

“The priests of King-tai at the close of day
Are seen o’er the ridges wending their way.”

The charm of such views is chiefly in the imagination which seeks to fancy the scenes of former days, when the monastery was in its prime, and the priests were numbered by hundreds. It is now in a state of decline, and the bare hills and solitary monk are but shadows of the past.

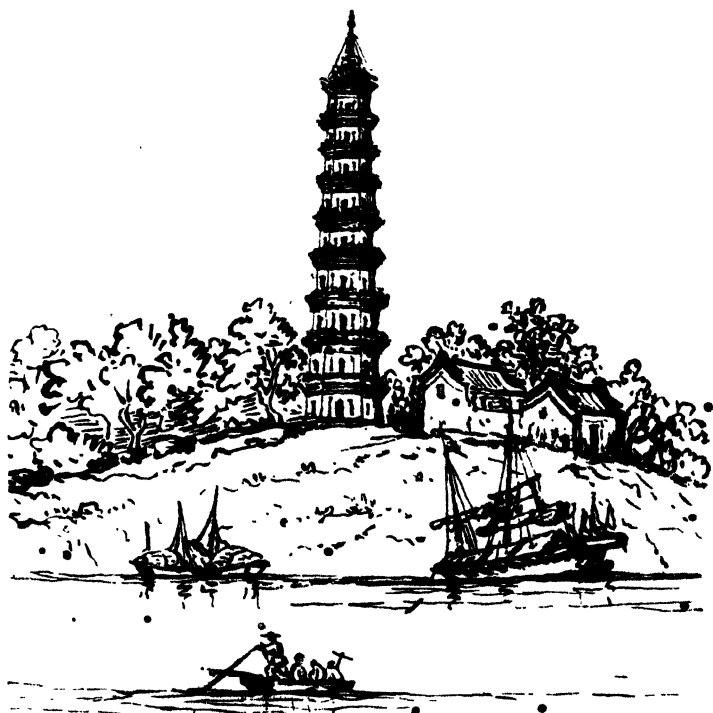
Among the unfurling charms of these hills, the cascade of the Sweet Rush Brook holds a conspicuous place. This spot is ever full of attractions for those who enjoy the quiet beauty of a mountain retreat, made cool and musical by scattered spray and the melodious dashing of.

the waterfall. Its natural attractions are greatly enhanced by the associations that surround it. It was the favourite retreat of Su-Tung-po, the banished statesman, during his short sojourn in Canton. Drawn thither by its sylvan beauty and pure, sweet water, he spent much of his time at the little monastery in the wooded vale adjoining. Mingling practical wisdom with all that he did, and ever watchful for an opportunity to benefit the people among whom he was thrown, he proposed a plan to the provincial authorities for bringing the water of this never-failing brook to the city. So much interest did he manifest in the scheme, that he made it the subject of an elaborate essay, showing the advantages that would be derived from supplies of this water stored in reservoirs for the use of the inhabitants of the city, compelled, as they were, to use the brackish and unwholesome water of the wells and river, the cause, as he pointed out, of pestilence and general disease in the spring and summer. The water of this brook still maintains its ancient repute, and is brought in scanty supplies at considerable expense for the use of a favoured few in Canton.

Marks of the poet's sojourn are seen in a sonnet inscribed on a stone tablet. His own autograph copy was written on the wall, and when found to be perishing was cut in stone to preserve the precious monument. I take the liberty of transcribing the following translation—

“ I will not have a monk to be my guide,
But lonely in yon drooping cloud explore
Each mountain fastness, whence rivulets slide,
The precipice and its thousand trees of yore ;—

Or where the cataract leaps a hundred feet
To seething pools, with spray in heaven-tinged showers,
Here in the old days grew the rushes sweet
About the hermit's cells : and here the Cham-pak's flowers
Heard the first doctrine of the founder saint :
As who would say, " We mock the king, Chin-Shih,
Who hither sent to learn of immortality."



PA-CHOW PAGODA.

The charms of this attractive nook are set off by many lesser beauties. All the precipices, mountains, glens, falling brooks, and grottoes, as their names imply,

perpetuate some legend of the olden time, the fairy Ching being credited with many of the marvellous exploits of that semi-mythical period. The following lines invite to a nearer view of the picturesque cataract.

“From the bridge at the foot 'tis distinctly perceived,
But no draught from the Sweet Rush Cascade is received.”

One course towards the east leads us down the Pearl River, past the pagodas and forts which stand out prominently on the north and south banks and on the islands in the stream. Stopping at the Pa-chow barrier, we examine the fine nine-storeyed pagoda rising from the little hill near the water. The Chinese account says that south-east of Canton an island rises abruptly from the river to a height of over one hundred feet, with three mound-like hills, in appearance resembling a guitar, whence the name Pa-chow, “Guitar Island,” comes. Near the close of the Ming dynasty several high dignitaries united in a request for the erection of a Buddhist pagoda, nine storeys high, at this point, which, rising up directly from the water, should bring strength and security to the country. Its name should be the “Sea Whale” pagoda. On the north a temple to Pak-tai, the great god of the north, should protect it, while at the side the “Sea Whale” monastery should stand.

Leaving Whampoa to the right, we hug the northern shore, and soon come to Fu-sui hill and Po-lo temple. For nearly a thousand years generations of travellers and sightseers have placed the Sun's Bath, as seen from this point, among the great sights of the region near Canton. It is the view of the sun apparently rising

out of the water that is so highly praised. Below, to the east, the Pearl River, receiving the waters of the East River, broadens into a wide sheet, and the view of the sunrise over this stretch of water, under favourable circumstances, cannot fail to inspire delight in the mind of every lover of nature. The poetic fancy sees the "king of day," as a giant rising from his ablutions, scattering the crystal drops as he rises, and causing the quivering surface of the water to glimmer as with the sparkle of myriads of diamonds. The temple adjoining is one of great historic interest. It is erected to Hung-shing, the popular deity of south China, who, among other titles, is called the Great God of the Southern Sea. Hung-shing was a native of Canton, of obscure parentage, who rose to distinction by his own merits, and was afterward deified, his canonisation receiving Imperial endorsement, a deputy from the Court in Peking appearing annually with offerings to present at his shrine. This is the original temple erected to him, hundreds having since been built in all parts of the land. In this temple there is also an image of a black man, about whom vague stories are told, one account saying that he was a high officer from Po-lo Kwok, supposed to be Borneo, who went ashore to plant the seeds of the Po-lo, or pine-apple, and before he had finished the task, his ship was carried away by a strong wind, and he was left there to die. Another version represents him to have been a sailor from a foreign ship accidentally left behind. In front of the temple stands the Sea-view Tower, and to the right the Sun's Bath Pavilion, ascending which, and looking to the east in the clear dawn, is obtained the wonderful view,

the sun rising from the bosom of the great sea, which a native poet thus describes:—

“Roseate circles round the wide horizon gleam,
As the uprising sun pours gems upon the stream.”

A few miles below Po-lo temple we enter the Luk-po canal, which cuts off the sharp angle made by the junction



BANANA TREES.

of the East and Pearl Rivers, shortens our journey east by several miles, and affords a quiet passage when the river outside is rough and stormy. Along its banks are broad banana plantations, with great clusters of fruit hanging near the base of the enormous leaves, propped up by wooden supports, that they may ripen properly. Banana trees are of rapid growth, and are often planted as a pro-

tection to young fruit trees of a slower and hardier kind. Rows of young plum, peach, and pear trees are often found among the banana plantations, and as they grow to a size when fruit begins to come, the bananas are cut away, showing flourishing orchards ready to bear. In these broad fields, often remote from the villages, straw huts are put up, in which the men whose work it is to watch the ripening fruit live. At the eastern extremity of this canal projects the rocky point of Nam-kong, a round black hill, sloping down to a point near the river, where a square pagoda stands to bring good luck to the country. Numerous small streams enter the river from both sides, opening the way to broad and fertile plains.

The first town of importance we reach is San-tong, which is built in a square around a large pond, and in the centre of a brisk trade. On the hills around are many fine orchards of olive and lichee trees, and villages with square towers surrounding their base. Above San-tong the telegraph line from Canton to Hong-kong crosses the river by a submarine cable. This was the first telegraph line constructed on Chinese soil, and excited bitter opposition from the people. It was undertaken by an enterprising Chinaman, who had imbibed advanced ideas as he studied English and other branches in a mission school in Hong-kong. Securing the protection of the Government, he pushed the enterprise to completion in the face of the great opposition encountered. Apart from the general hostility of the people to all innovation, the thought of that mysterious wire passing over their land aroused all their supernatural dread of occult influences. Furthermore the conjunction of names in the termini and

intermediate points was such as to increase their dread and dislike. Beginning at Canton, it passes through Fu-mun, and ends in Kow-loong. To the native most saturated with superstition, and controlled by signs and portents, the proposition to take the sheep or the lamb from the "City of Rams," as Canton is called, carry it through the "Tiger's Gate," that is Fu-mun, and deposit it in the den of the "Nine Dragons," that is Kow-loong, was so ominous in its combination of names, that nothing but evil could result. •

• In several places the people rose up and assaulted the workmen, vowing that the wires should never pass through their districts. Official help was called in, and the disturbances quelled. At one point, where the people were especially riotous, the Viceroy sent a despatch to the district magistrate, instructing him to call the offenders to account. He designated a certain house, where the gentry of the villages concerned were to meet and confer with him. When he arrived at the place there was no one to receive him. This was a breach of propriety implying the utmost contempt and defiance. Sending out his attendants to see if any were coming, they came back with the information that they saw men carrying bundles of straw and wood, which they were piling around the house, the apparent intention being to set fire to them, and burn or drive the magistrate out. He beat a hasty retreat, but vengeance overtook the perpetrators of this most serious practical joke. A military force was sent to reduce them to subjection; and the ringleaders were arrested, and several of them executed. To secure the completion of the line a guard of two hundred soldiers

was sent with the workmen. It is now an accomplished fact. The people see that no evil has come to them in consequence, and will, it is hoped, be more ready to admit other improvements in the same line. It has been purchased by the Government, and extended several hundred miles further, towards the borders of Tonquin.

Fifty miles east of Canton the Lung-mun River, flowing down through the Tsang-shing district, joins its waters with those of the East River. Its entrance is marked by no conspicuous object, low, grassy banks lining its lower course; but the transparent clearness of its water is at once noticed in contrast with the more tinted current of the main stream. Turning directly north, we sail through a country whose charm lies in the green fields that extend in undulating lines on either side, in fine fruit orchards, and large villages surrounded by thick groves of banyan and fruit trees. Twelve miles up the stream we come to the market town of Shek-tan, which is the centre of a great cluster of large villages, eighteen of which were visited in one day, as we made a tour of them with books. The great attraction along the lower course of this river is found in the extensive orchards of lichees. These trees, with their densely-packed foliage and symmetrical forms, cover the slopes on both sides of the stream. In the early spring, the delicate pink tints of the new leaves, and in the summer the beautiful clusters of ripe fruit, in appearance like so many large strawberries hanging thickly over the boughs, add greatly to the charm of the landscape.

Another twelve miles brings us to the district city of Tsang-shing. A short distance below it is an island on.

which is seen a fine grove of caryota palms, the fibres of which are woven into mats, and the pith used as tinder in connection with the flint. Tall and majestic, with their broad leaves much frayed at the edges, and strings of peculiar blossoms and fruit that hang from the base of the leaves, like long chains, they present a striking and pleasing appearance. Tsang-shing is a slow-going place, with a fairly good wall around it. The chief trade clusters about the east gate, from which it is but a few steps to the water. Along the river the road follows the line of the wall, amid a grove of fine trees, while outside the north gate are many well-shaded spots, with abundance of ferns on the city wall and river bank. To the north-west is a cluster of large villages, where the leading gentry of the district live.

For the next twenty miles but few towns are seen along the river, the people mostly living in villages inland. It is an attractive farming district, well cultivated, and showing every variety of products. On the left a small stream flows in from the towns of Pai-tam and Miu-tam, and in the plains that open out from these market centres are many populous villages; one in particular, a mile beyond Miu-tam, is nearly a mile and a half in length, with every appearance of wealth and prosperity. The road to it leads through extensive olive orchards, the trees laden with fruit. On the right, as we ascend, are seen the outlying spurs of the Loh-fow Mountains, which approach the river near the market town of Ching-kwo. This town is the centre of a busy trade. On every third day a fair is held, attended by thousands, chiefly Hakkas, from the surrounding country.

The shops extend for nearly a mile along the bank, and the streets in front of them are packed with the crowds that gather. Behind the town rises a fine wooded hill, on the side of which is a noted Buddhist shrine, which boasts, as its chief attraction, the body of a Bodhisattva, which has been worshipped for twelve centuries. In early June the annual celebration at this shrine takes place, which is attended by thousands, many going from Canton and other cities to assist in the processions and festivities. It is the first on this side in the series of great temples that stretches across the Loh-fow Hills.

Above Ching-kwo we enter a mountainous country, very different from the rolling plain through which we have passed. Half-a-day's journey by the river which winds among the hills brings us to a little pass, where the cliffs come down to the water's edge, and a small island appears above in a way to suggest the name "Leung-lung Chang-chü" (Two Dragons contending for the Pearl). Our attention is attracted to a company of men following some dark object as it floats down the stream. We are told it is a water ox, which a tiger killed the day before, but was unable to carry off. This proof of the presence of such game adds spice to the journey, and gives point to the many warnings of the boatmen to be careful not to stray too far into the hills and ravines. The "Dragon and Tiger Rapid," which we soon approach, is one that requires all the strength and skill of the crew to ascend. The swift current of this stream is checked by heavy dams, and the task of ascending these barriers, without the convenience of locks, is not an easy one. Over some of them the water falls four feet or more. The passage

left for the boats is narrow, but approaching them at a proper angle, and giving the right turn to the narrow pointed boats, the ascent is accomplished, sometimes with surprising ease.

The second day in this region shows a great increase in the number and height of the hills. But few towns and villages are seen, and the amount of land open for cultivation is small. Groves of bamboos and pines cover the plains and hillsides. We anchor for the night in a deep valley near a prominent peak called Mong-fu-shan. It is very steep, with wide-mouthed caverns near the top. The Chinese regard it as the abode of fairies and evil spirits. In the morning a fine pagoda, conspicuously set on a hill near Yeung-kai village, is passed, and the little market town of Sha-kang, remarkable for the fine stream of clear water that flows through its streets. A few miles' further travel amid the hills brings us to a remarkable gorge. On the west side rises a massive rocky cliff, while on the east a low rocky hill runs along the shore, and between them the narrow channel is obstructed by what looks like the remains of a bridge, a series of rocky pillars extending across the stream. They are so placed as to render navigation a dangerous matter, especially when the water is high, the only available passage lying between the two middle columns, which have only about twelve to fourteen feet of clear water. When the water is high and the current strong, it becomes a serious matter to attempt the passage, great skill being required to steer the boats as they sweep down the great curve above, so as to strike the narrow passage and go through without injury. Failure to accomplish this would dash them on the rocks,

and bring inevitable ruin. In the time of heavy rains the boats must sometimes wait for a week or ten days for the water to subside before they dare try the passage. This great causeway is called by various names, such as the "Ancient Bridge," or, the "Fu-kiu," or "Tiger's Bridge," which is peculiarly appropriate, as a tiger might easily leap from rock to rock and cross without wetting his feet. It is also called Lung-mun, the "Dragon Gate," indicating that the narrow passage is reserved for the entrance of the dragon in his imperial progress.

Above this bridge of rocks the river sweeps in a great curve along the foot of the western hills, forming a great sandbar on the opposite shore. Half-a-day's journey above this brings us to Lung-wa, an important centre, where two market towns with many villages adjacent lie facing each other on opposite sides of the river. The source of business and revenue to this place is found in the limestone hills, the only ones for many miles around, in which are large quarries. Over a hundred boats lay along the shore as we passed up, to transport the lime, which is of a superior quality. Several of the villages give evidence of great prosperity, and we were told that many wealthy people live here, who have made their money in the lime business. The rapids and dams in the upper portion of the river are very stiff, so that it is next to impossible for a single boat's crew to make the ascent; they therefore wait for several boats to go in company, and mutually assist each other. The most difficult of all are those which occur in the first three miles below Lung-mun, the water rushing over them in perfect cataracts.

On a prominent hill below the city, in a picturesque

position, stands the Lung-mun pagoda, overlooking a plain of much fertility. The city itself is small, and shows but few signs of activity. Rice, sweet potatoes, and whampes of a superior quality are produced. Lung-mun is the head of navigation for boats of the large size, but smaller craft can push on a day or two further to Teet-kong. On every side the hills and mountains rise, clothed in places with trees. To the north a portage road leads forty miles to the city of Cheung-ning, which lies at the head of navigation, on a stream that flows down between high mountain ranges and joins the East River, a hundred miles from the mouth of the Lung-mun stream. To the west, over rugged mountains, divided by deep valleys, is the road to Leung-how-teen, and thence down the Tsung-fa stream. Both these routes promise much that is grand and inspiring in mountain scenery, to compensate for the fatigue of travel and the discomfort of native inns.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOH-FOW MOUNTAINS.



MOST famous of all the groups of mountains in the southern portion of Canton, is the cluster of peaks and ridges that centres about the great mountain of Loh-fow. Lying about sixty miles east of Canton, these peaks form a prominent feature in the landscape for many miles around. Several hundred square miles are covered by them, the main mountain Loh-fow measuring about thirty miles around the base, and rising to a height of 3,500 feet. Several ways of approach are open from the west, south, and east, the choice depending upon the point in the hills to be first reached. We select the nearest and most direct, taking passage in a boat from Canton to the city of Shek-lung, sixty miles east, and thence to the mountains.

In the interval that elapses while coolies are being engaged to transport our baggage we take a look at the town. It contains about 100,000 people, and is the centre of an extensive trade in sugar. In the broad plains to the south and east, many hundreds of acres are given up to the cultivation of sugar-cane. The coarse sugar prepared on the plantations is brought

in large quantities by boat to Shek-lung, where it is refined in the large factories, some of which employ two or three hundred men each. The best brand of Chinese sugar, known as the "ping-fa," or "frost" (literally "ice flower") sugar, comes from this place. The drippings of this first quality make a delightful syrup, resembling in flavour the best maple syrup. It can be procured only during the months in which the "frost" sugar is prepared. The people of Shek-lung are of a turbulent disposition, and the place is noted for the sudden mobs that break out. Of the suddenness and the violence of these demonstrations I have had a vivid experience, which, as it illustrates the character of the people, it may be of interest to relate.

Having opened a chapel in the place at the urgent request of native Christians living there, a prosperous work had been in operation for several years, when the troubles arising from the French war in Tonquin caused a spirit of unrest to spread over the country. Having occasion to visit Shek-lung in the interest of the chapel there in company with Mr. White, we found the people greatly excited. Several days were spent in going through the streets and preaching in the chapel, but apart from an unusual amount of rude speech, no hostile demonstrations were made. Bold threats of dire punishment to the "foreign devils" who had dared at such a time to intrude themselves into their streets were in every instance turned to nought by pleasant remarks and assumed fearlessness and indifference. A look or word directed especially to those most forward in denouncing us, would often send them away in con-

fusion, while a finger pointed at some offending victim, would cause him to flee in terror and hide himself. Saturday evening came, and an unusually large gathering of Christians in the chapel was cheering under the circumstances. The meeting was an inspiring one, and not one of those present had the slightest apprehension of an outbreak. We met on Sunday morning, the doors being closed as usual, and had almost finished one service when some men began pounding on the door. To quiet them Mr. White went into the street and kept them under control until the Christians had been dismissed. The doors were then thrown open, and all invited to enter. They filled the chapel, and when all were seated I arose to speak to them, appealing to their better feelings, and explaining the object of our coming, but had not time to say much before a large stone thrown by some one in the street whizzed past my head, and struck the wall behind with a great noise. This caused the people to rush toward the door. I jumped upon a seat and called them to return, and listen quietly to what I had to say; but as I walked among them trying to reassure them, I saw men with large stones in their hands which they drew up into their wide sleeves as I approached. It was evident from their sullen looks and the stones in their hands that they were bent upon mischief, so calling the native preacher and whispering to Mr. White to hold them in check if possible, I went for assistance to the civil magistrate's office, a short distance away. Here an unexpected reception met us. The man in attendance refused me admission, saying—

"You can't come in. The officer is absent."

"If he is absent, there is some one in charge of affairs, and I must see him immediately on important business," I replied.

"There is no one in the office, and you cannot come in," he cried angrily, and tried to stop our progress.

Pushing my way past him, I found the magistrate in his office, and without referring to the insolence of the gate-keeper, I politely addressed him, saying—

"A throng of angry men has gathered in front of the chapel; will your honour please send two or three policemen to restrain the people from violence?"

"What right have you to come to this place and excite the people?" he demanded, without noticing my request.

"I travel under passport from the Government," I reply, "and have a full right to visit this town, and to receive your official protection."

"You should know better than to come here with your books and preaching to excite the people," he persisted.

"Will your honour cease these reproaches, and attend to my request? If you send men there will be no outbreak. If you do not there will be an uproar, and you will be responsible."

After more parleying he promised to send the men, and we proceeded with all haste to the military commander's office two miles distant. Crowds gathered to hoot at us as we passed, but were evidently unaware of the disturbance at the chapel. We reached the commander's office without any mishap, and were at once admitted, and immediate assistance was promised. A messenger from

the chapel arrived at the same time with the information that the mob had broken in and destroyed everything. Soldiers were sent without delay to check them in their work of destruction, which they did by driving them out and locking the street gate. Their taste for rapine had been kindled, and baffled at this point, they set out *en masse* for the Roman Catholic Mission in a village outside the town, and in a short time levelled forty houses to the ground, driving the people from their homes, and seeking to kill the French priest who lived among them. When the mob in front of our chapel became uncontrollable Mr. White fled to the boat, followed by an enraged throng, who hurled stones at him, some of which struck and severely bruised him. A native preacher who was in the chapel was still more unfortunate. The mob seized him as he was ascending the ladder to his room, threw him violently upon the stone floor, and beat him on the head with pieces of broken seats. He was nearly killed, but succeeded in escaping, and had presence of mind enough to fly to our boat, where he was safely sheltered.

While these scenes were being enacted in one part of the town, my assistant and I were debating the question as to how to reach the boat. The people were now fully aroused, and two miles of crowded streets lay between us and the boat. Any show of fear would have been fatal, and we had determined to run the gauntlet, and, in case of violence, enter the nearest shop and claim protection. The commander saw our danger, and said immediately,—

“You cannot go back through the streets; I will send you in a boat,” and calling a boat, he despatched an escort of soldiers to conduct us to our barge, which had dropped

several miles down the river to escape the violence of the mob. This matter was at once reported to the Viceroy, the burden of the blame being laid to the charge of the civil magistrate, who was degraded from office in consequence, while the conduct of the military commander was commended, and his prompt action received official recognition. In a few days the chapel was repaired and reopened, and after a thorough investigation full indemnity for all damages was paid.

The people of this section are also noted for their *esprit de corps*. On one occasion a man from this district became involved in a quarrel in the fruit market in Canton, and finding himself overpowered, cried out—

“Men of Tung-kun, help!”

Immediately several men sprang to his assistance, and rendered such efficient service that he soon came off victorious. An acquaintance asked one of these men,

“Who is your friend for whom you have been fighting?”

“I don’t know,” was the reply. “I never saw him before. He is a Tung-kun man, that is sufficient. We all stand by each other.”

Having secured coolies for our baggage, we take our way through the straggling town of Shek-wán, that lies opposite Shek-lung, and thence across the plains for nearly twenty miles to the great hills. Through this plain winds a little stream; and the land is so level that we are greatly deceived in the distance. Reaching the lower hills, where we thought our journey for the day should end, as the sun was setting, we find that five miles still lie between us and the first monastery. Our coolies press us to stop in the

little market town of Shán-sai-uen, but the low, dingy houses, the reeking streets, the swarms of flies, mosquitoes, and other pests, together with the unsavoury throngs of people crowding around us in their curiosity, determine us, tired and hungry though we are, to push on to the monastery. Darkness is approaching, and our coolies profess ignorance of the way, so a guide is procured, and we continue our way along the course of the sparkling mountain stream. The purple shades which evening has cast over the hills rapidly deepen into darkness, which, in this region, where twilight is of short duration, falls suddenly around us, and we feel the need of a guide. The path is intricate and full of pitfalls, but some flaming pine torches procured at a hamlet, where the dogs were fierce in their outcries against our intrusion, enable us to find the way to the monastery of Fa-shau, which we reach an hour after dark. Kindly received by a venerable monk, we are provided with the best accommodation the cloister affords. In the open court stands a fine Cape jasmine, covered with a profusion of large milk-white flowers, which exhale a heavy, delightful perfume, and beside it is a great stone tub and a well of clear soft water, in which we luxuriate for the next half hour under cover of darkness.

This monastery is at the foot of the hills, and is united with the one on the summit, under control of the monk who received us. Secluded in a grove of fine trees, it shows only upward views of the great mountain. Paths from it lead in all directions among the lower hills, between which lie small rice plains. Among the tangled vegetation on the hillside are many attractive plants.

From Fa-shau to the summit the distance is eight miles, the road leading 'through ravines and over the rocky shoulders of the cliffs. The first section winds up the gorge with stone steps to assist in the ascent, the path in many places covered over by flowering shrubs, the brook pouring down in cataracts over the boulders, until we reach the terrace on which is built the famous Buddhist monastery of Wa-shau-toy.

It is one of the oldest and most celebrated shrines in these mountains, and stands in the midst of a fine grove at an elevation of six hundred feet above the plain. The cloisters are extensive, with accommodation for one hundred resident priests. Gardens for flowers and vegetables are laid out on either side, while behind is a deep ravine heavily wooded with trees of great size and beauty. Following this ravine, we come to an inaccessible precipice, over which pours the little stream from the heights above, watering the rich dale of Wa-shau before it descends to the plain below. To search this wood, to explore the caves and grottoes, to examine the rich flora and fauna, and enjoy the rare variety of scenery from the many points of view, would require several days, in which the urbane abbot would extend hospitable shelter, making many concessions in the matter of diet to the taste and desire of his guests.

Returning to the main path by a narrow way up the steep bluff to the west of the monastery, we reach a gap in the hills 800 feet high, from which, on either side, spread out in endless variation the hills and plains adjoining. Up the steep ascent our pathway winds amid rocks and granite boulders, the views ever widening. At

one time we approach the precipitous height above the Wa-shau terrace, and again turn to the north, when glimpses of distant ranges, piled against the sky, greet us. At a height of 1,800 feet, a storm of mist comes sweeping down the mountain sides, enveloping all in its fleecy veil. We spread our lunch upon the rocks beside a spring of water, and wait for the mist to clear away. New and beautiful flowers adorn the rough hillsides, gorgeous rhododendrons and other striking plants lighting up the brown rocks. A thousand feet more we ascend and pass over a sharp ridge, beyond which a short descent brings us to a gap in the mountains, through which we pass over a black rock. This is the supposed site of the fabled "Iron Bridge," that, magicians say, joins the two mountains Loh and Fow. The former, they say, was always fixed in this place, but Fow (The Floating One), as its name indicates, floated hither from some distant point, as far north, some accounts say, as Ning-po, and draw irresistibly toward the great stationary mass of Loh, the two were joined together by a mysterious iron bridge. Traditions of the early times still survive, and many of the natives still insist, notwithstanding the constant travel and exploration of the hills, that ascending Loh you come to this iron bridge, beyond which rise the inaccessible heights of Fow, which no one is able to scale.

Beyond this so-called iron bridge is a noted spring, remarkable for its never-failing supply of clear, sweet water, and also for the part it has played in the history of the region. Situate on the dividing line it is claimed by two villages, and has been the cause of much contention and bloody strife. By directing the flow of its water for the

first few feet, the course and destination of the stream may be entirely changed. In one case it may flow down toward the east, supplying the village immediately at the foot, but change its course, and it flows down to the west, into another village ten miles distant from the first. It is the custom of people from the villages as they go up the mountain to turn the stream toward their own homes.



PUT-WAN MONASTERY (BUDDHIST).

Crossing another ridge and an intervening ravine, we come to a broad plateau 3,000 feet above the sea, on which is found the little monastery of Put-wan, whose name signifies, "the cloud fanning or scattering" monastery, within which we find shelter for a few days. Nothing can exceed the charm of this lofty retreat in August and September, when the whole country below is sweltering in the excessively sultry days that always

come at the end of summer. On the hills immediately around are the plantations yielding what is called the Wan-mo, "Cloud Mist" tea. An introduction from the Abbot of Fa-shau secures us a cordial reception, and all the comforts attainable at this height.

From Put-wan as a centre, excursions are made in all directions. First we go to Fi-wang-ting, "Flying Cloud Pinnacle," the highest point on the hills, 3,500 feet above the plain. The outlook is wonderful. Hours may be spent in studying it—watching the changes caused by the cloud, looking down upon mists and rain-storms below, and the whole breadth of country stretching down to the sea. A small altar, called the "Moon View" shrine, marks the highest point, and near it stands a grave, which, if there be any truth in geomancy, must be in a most favourable location. At the time when the harvest moon is full, companies of priests from the monasteries below ascend the height, and spend a greater part of the night in worshipping the moon.

Taking the path down the ravine, in which flows the little stream that rises near the monastery, we come to the terrace called Ku-ye-toy, from which the view of the rising sun is one of the finest sights that can be imagined. No words can adequately picture the inspiring scene as observed from this point. From this terrace also we look down into the mysterious depths of Monkey Gorge, an inaccessible ravine covered with a dense growth of trees and shrubs, and inhabited by a large tribe of monkeys. Guarded from below by a sheer precipice, which no one has yet been able to climb, and from above by an equally precipitous descent, which no one has

Ling-Nam.

dared to attempt, its depths are yet unexplored, and the monkeys left in undisturbed possession. A stone hurled from above into the tree tops brings them out in angry remonstrance against such insults. Living on the wild fruits and nuts of their mountain retreat, they seem to have sufficient food, except in times of drought or extreme cold, when they issue forth in search of sustenance. Numerous tales of their depredations are told. On one occasion they made a descent upon the orchard of the Pak-hok monastery, and in a single night stripped it of an abundant crop of various fruits, a trail of seeds and shells leading up the hill showing who the marauders were. An old priest at Put-wan had many tales to tell about them, and seemed to think them almost human. He had watched them at play, and seen the parents toss the little ones back and forth between them like balls. Companies of three hundred have been seen at one time.

On the verge of this deep, inaccessible, and precipitous ravine grew a wonderfully fine rhododendron, which I saw at once was new. It required some nerve and skill to secure specimens of the wondrously beautiful and richly fragrant shrubs that overhung the gorge. The great chasm is filled with a constant, cloud-like mist, which, as it rises, causes the trunks and branches of these shrubs to be overgrown with moss. This third new rhododendron is called *R. simiarum*, in remembrance of the inhabitants of the gorge. The other two, discovered at Fi-loy, are also found on the Loh-fow hills. These mountains, with their deep ravines, in which the original forests still remain, are unusually rich in floral treasures, every new excursion revealing fresh wonders. Among the other

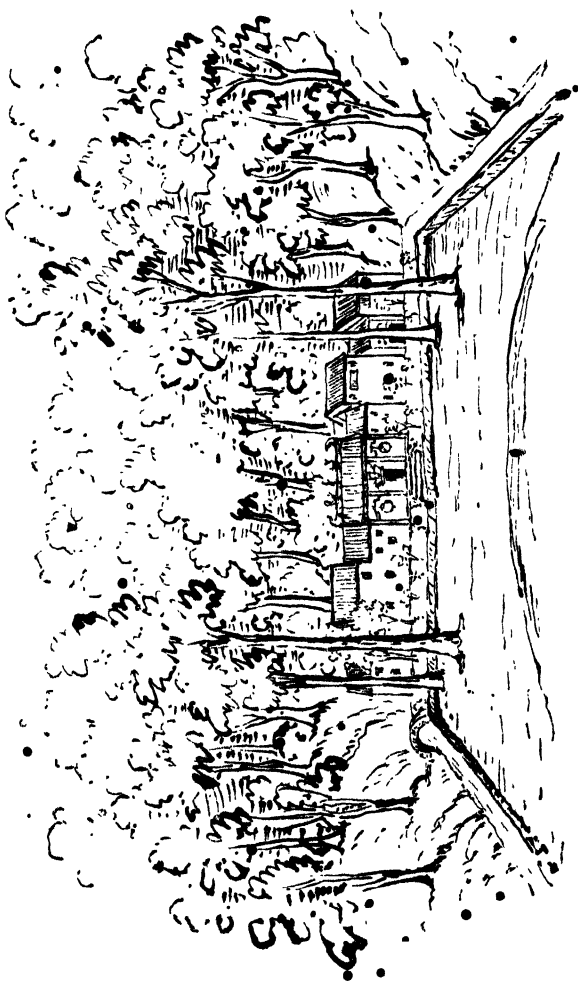
novelties found in wandering through the dells and water courses about Put-wan was a new podophyllum, described by Dr. Hance as *P. versipelle*. The leaves vary marvelously in outline from a square, parallelogram, triangle, or pentagon, to a circle, and are either with or without lobes. Only a year previous to the discovery of this Loh-fow plant, a new species, described as *P. pleianthum*, was found in Formosa. Previous to that time the American May-apple, or Mandrake, *P. peltatum*, the fruit of which is eaten, and from the rhizome of which a purgative resin, named podophyllin, much used in hepatic derangements, is prepared, and the Himalayan *P. emodi*, were the only two species known. That this remarkable genus should in two years be doubled in China is certainly a fact of great interest to botanists. The Loh-fow species is extensively used for medicinal purposes by the Chinese.

To the west of Put-wan are several conspicuous peaks, covered with grass and a few low shrubs, and among them a road leads down to the plain, and thence toward Tsang-shing. This road along the lower levels is lined by fine trees, which form evergreen archways, that add greatly to its attractiveness.

Taking the road to the north from Put-wan, we pass in a winding course amidst the peaks until we come to a small meadow, thickly grown with grass and broad-leaved plants. A small stream flows through it toward the steep cliff side. Crossing this meadow we come to what is called Sit-teen-mun, "Little Heaven Gate." On either side sharp peaks rise up, and between them is the little meadow, in front of which is a sheer precipice of nearly

2,000 feet, over which the stream falls in a splendid cascade. To the right we find the path leading down the precipitous sides, at every turn of which we catch inspiring views of the cascade, falling sometimes over perpendicular walls, and again amid great masses of detached rock in a less precipitous course, while here and there a few yards of gentle incline subdue the rushing torrent. Along its course are many beautiful shrubs, among which we note a magnificent species of magnolia, new to science, with superb blossoms just opening. Orchids of great beauty, rhododendrons, and a host of other plants adorn the rocky ravine. We are descending into a great valley, the hills on the north being only a little less high than the Loh-fow peaks. The descent on this side is accomplished in three miles, so steep is the path we follow.

Crossing some low hills at the foot, we come to the splendid grove and monastery of So-liu-kun. Its situation is perfect. Behind rises the main hill, flanked on either side by smaller ones, and at the head of the semi-circular basin so enclosed stands the monastery. The hills are covered with noble trees of great height, a bit of the primeval forest left undisturbed. In front are the rice-plains stretching down to the creek, which flows through the valley. The monastery is the richest and the finest in the land, and is largely patronised by rich merchants from Hong-kong and elsewhere, who come to spend a few months or weeks in what they call religious retirement, living on vegetable diet. The extensive buildings and decorations are all in fine style. The abbot is a man of literary reputation, and several of the younger priests are



SO-LIU MONASTERY (TAOIST).

of good families. From this attractive resting-place many excursions may be made to the adjoining ravines and gorges. On one of the spurs to the west, a thousand feet high, is found a cluster of fine tree-ferns, belonging to a species elsewhere found only in the Himalayas and in Japan. On the mountain side opposite are several villages, in which live a tribe of the Aborigines from Lien-chow, who were brought to this place and given a reservation in the hills. They have adopted Chinese dress and customs, so that it is difficult to distinguish them from the other people seen. From So-liu-kun we take the road to the east along the creek. The eye never tires of the grand scenes that open out on every side. Three miles beyond we find in the midst of a fine grove the monastery of Cha-shan, which is in a very dilapidated condition, with only two or three priests in attendance. On a projecting cliff opposite, over which the road passes, is a gateway, and the remains of fortifications, which show how the narrow pass was guarded. Around the foot of the great mountain we march at one point, coming full abreast of Monkey Gorge, which in the distance, with its heavy covering of trees, looks inviting and easy of access. Many other similar ravines mark the great sides of the mountain with deep furrows, and are filled with luxuriant vegetation. Many of the villages passed are surrounded by fine groves of various trees, some of them covered with abundance of white blossoms. Twelve miles' travel around the base brings us to Chung-hue, the oldest monastery in the hills. Seventeen hundred and fifty years have passed since it was founded. It is rather outside than on the great hill, and marks the scene of

many of the fairy Kot-hung's marvellous exploits. A monument to his memory stands on the hillside behind. Many spots revered because of their association with him are pointed out to the stranger—the grotto, with its never-failing spring, which drops incessantly from year to year, rain or drought neither increasing nor diminishing the trickling stream, his place of meditation, the place of his ascension, are shown, and the superstitious still see in the variegated hues of the leaves and flowers the clothing he dropped as he entered the company of the immortals.

Beginning at Chung-hue, the Taoists soon spread to So-liu and elsewhere, extensive tracts of lands were attached by perpetual tenure to their various institutions, which in later times became rich sources of revenue. They now share with the Buddhists the choice sites on the hills, six large monasteries belonging to each being found. In earlier times they had the monopoly of the place, and with their belief in alchemy and supernatural beings covered the whole with a network of superstitions which have clung to it ever since. They excel in the occult and mysterious.

“ They deal in magic arts and spells,
And practise necromancy :
They show where sprites and fairies dwell,
And trust in geomancy.”

They attribute the natural features of this wonderful mountain to the agency of supernatural beings, and gather its various herbs to assist in the preparation of magic elixirs, in which they still believe. The history of Loh-fow in twenty volumes is a literary curiosity, abounding, as it does, in endless accounts of men who have

become genii, of the various products of the hills that act as charms against sinister influences. The thick forest that covered the mountains and plains when the Taoists first came furnished the appropriate surroundings to foster their belief in the marvellous.

Six miles' further travel brings us to Wong-lung-kun, which stands on a rocky shelf about eight hundred feet high. It is an extensive institution, surrounded by groves of fine trees, with a sparkling stream of water flowing down, and at the time we saw it included a school for young men. This seems to be a special feature of the Taoist institutions in Loh-fow. The abbots are men of education, who draw around them young men of talent. The quiet of the monastery, the inspiring character of their natural surroundings, and uninterrupted opportunity, furnish the best facilities for study. These students, however, form but a small portion of the priests. The greater part, as we observed, were men of a very different type, many of them hardened cases, and some fugitives from justice.

Behind Wong-lung the mountain side is thickly covered with trees, and in the upper part is a gorge known as the "Butterfly Gorge," from which, it is said, swarms of most exquisite butterflies issue. Some magnificent specimens I have seen from the place were extremely beautiful.

As we turn to leave Loh-fow a feeling of regret comes over us. Its peaks and gorges, inaccessible ravines, and wooded dells, its rare flora but partially investigated, and its rich fauna, of which still less is known, invite to deeper research and to closer inspection. Its great sides,

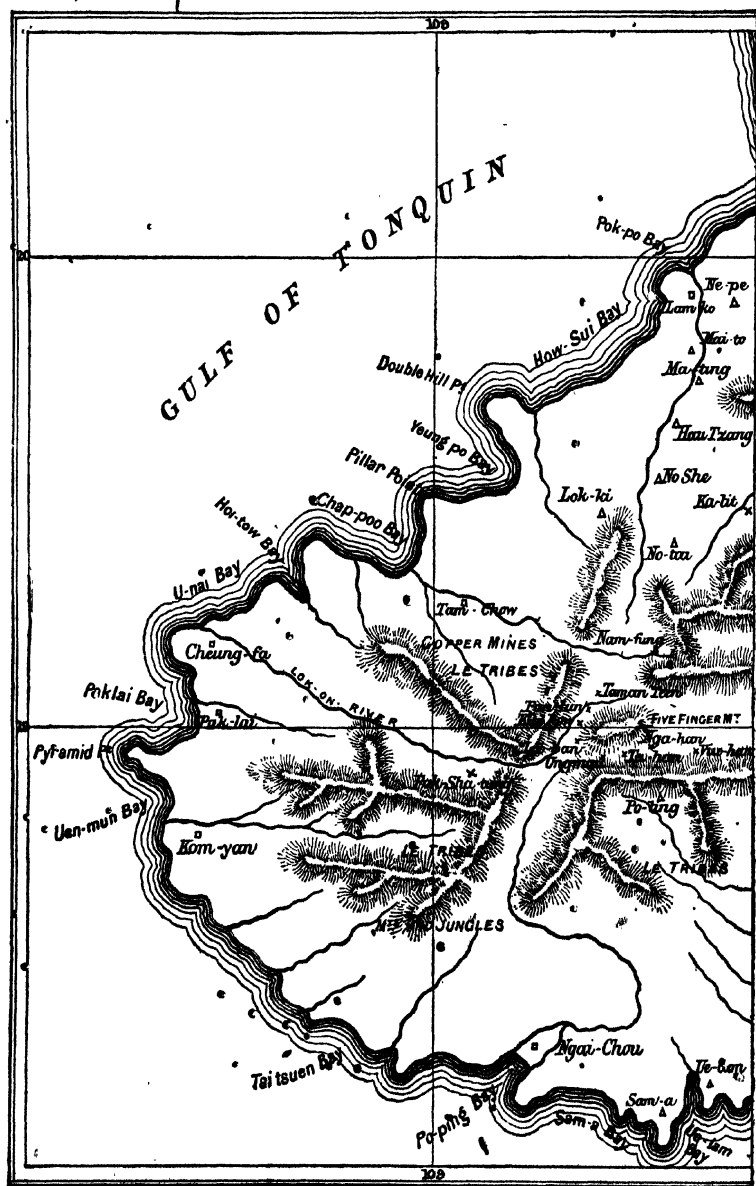
gored by deep ravines and gorges, filled with dense vegetation, appear smooth and gentle, as we recede ; and we find ourselves continually turning to gaze on the great dark mass, and dwell upon its mysterious traditions and remarkable histories, and the treasures and secrets it has never yet revealed.

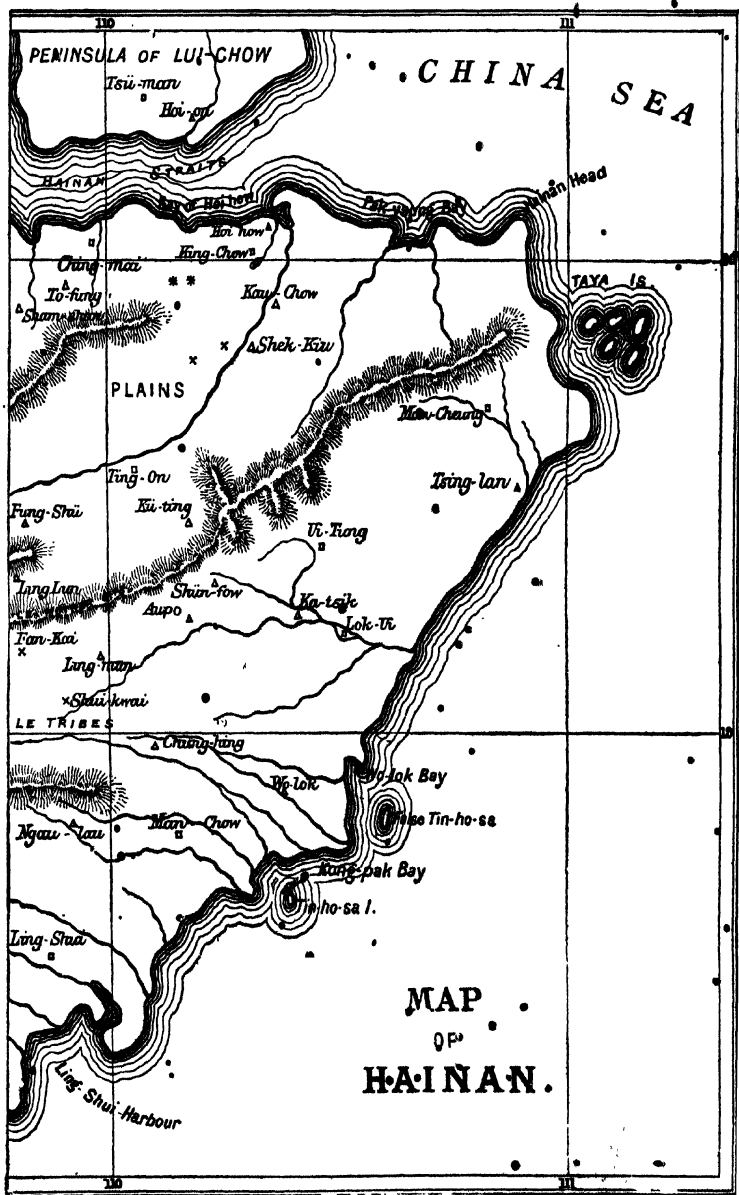
CHAPTER XVII.

HAINAN, OR THE ISLAND OF PALMS.



UNTIL very recent years the great island of Hainan, lying just within the tropics, was an almost unknown land to the world outside; and the reputation it bore as the haunt of pirates and desperate characters did not encourage investigation. The streams of commerce swept past it, ships touching only when necessary at some of the better harbours, without coming into any direct relations with the people. When the opening of Hoi-how, the chief town on the island, as a treaty port was under discussion some fifteen years ago, public attention was for the first time directed toward it, and several gentlemen connected with the Chinese Customs and the English Consular service made the circuit of the island in gunboats, landing at several places, and penetrating a few miles inland. One of them, the late Mr. Swinhoe, made a journey of several days into the interior to the town of Ling-mun. The information collected by these gentlemen gave many important facts in regard to the facilities for commerce along the coast, but contained nothing definite as to the natives of the country, the character, customs, and





disposition of the people in the broad and as yet unexplored interior.

Within the last few years Captain J. Calder, in command of the Chinese gunboat *Sui-tsing*, has improved the exceptional opportunities afforded him of mingling with and observing the life and character of the aboriginal people on the south of the island. His duties in the suppression of piracy and protection of the coast were such that he was not able to penetrate more than a few miles from the seashore; the extent of his observations, therefore, has of necessity been limited.

It was not until three years ago that the outside shell was really broken and the interior laid open. This was done in the first instance by Mr. C. C. Jeremiassen, a Danish gentleman, who is now devoting himself, unaided, to independent missionary work for the people of the island. In the months of April and May 1882 he made the circuit of the island on foot, testing the practicability of travelling unmolested through every district, and proving the friendliness of the people. The detailed account of this first extensive journey made by a foreigner inland is replete with interest. During the past year he has crossed the island from north to south, and again from east to west, encountering no special hostility from the people in any part. In October and November 1882 it was my good fortune to make extensive journeys through the interior of the island with this gentleman, an account of which is subjoined.

Hainan forms the extreme southern limit of the Chinese Empire, being in itself one of the largest Prefectures

of the Canton province, and lying, as it does, right abreast the Gulf of Tonquin, was threatened with invasion soon after the war in Tonquin brought the French into collision with the Chinese. Raised from centuries of obscurity into sudden prominence by its position in relation to the contending parties, its size, its resources, its population, its harbours, and general characteristics, became matters of eager inquiry. Called the Island of Palms by some, from the abundance of the cocoa-nut palm, betel nut palm,^c caryota, fan palm, and date palm, it lies in a semi-tropical sea, and is one hundred and fifty miles in length and a hundred miles in breadth.

Our journey from Hong-kong to Hoi-how was made in a wretched little steamer, with the cabin immediately above the boilers. All the arrangements of the ship were admirably fitted to produce discomfort and disgust, which were intensified by the slowness of speed, two days and the intervening night being consumed in traversing the two hundred and ninety miles between the two ports. We kept out to sea far enough to escape any view of the coast. The first land to greet the eye as we approached Hainan were seven small rocky islands, one of them perforated in a peculiar way by a great tunnel. Mu-fu Point, Po-tsin pagoda, and Hainan Head, appear successively as we enter the straits. The latter is the most dangerous point on the route; the rocks and the currents are so treacherous and the channel so intricate, that no ship will go through in the night. These difficulties of the passage are increased by the state of the tides, which ebb and flow through the straits but once in twenty-four hours. Long lines of white

spray showed where the breakers were dashing on the sandy beach of the peninsula jutting out from the mainland opposite.

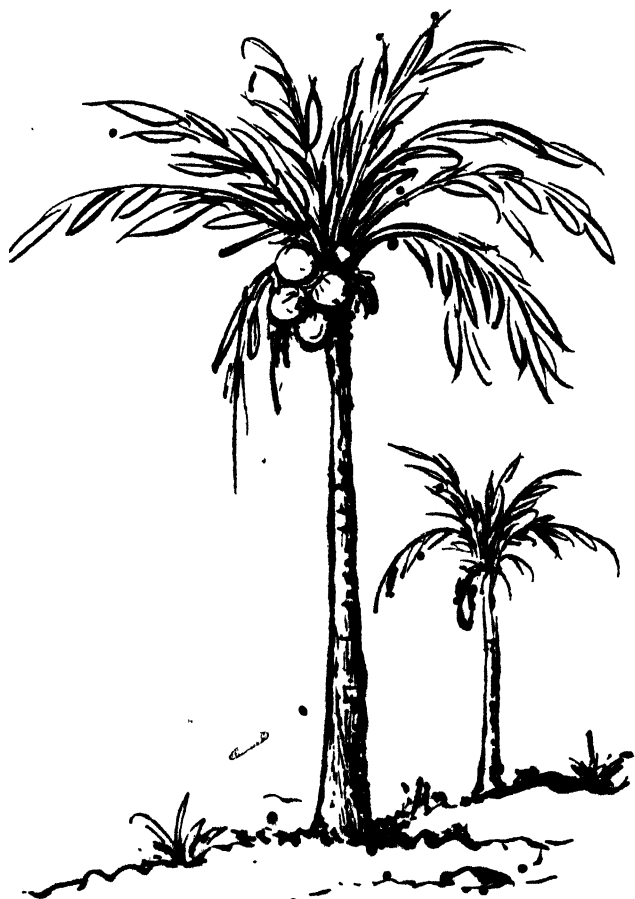
Late in the afternoon we dropped anchor in the open roadstead. The disadvantages of the harbour were at once apparent. The town lies three miles distant across a shallow bay, the inner portion showing only a broad stretch of slimy mud at low tide. Access to the town by boat is only possible when the tide is well up. The inconvenience of such a state of things, in the event of the frequent arrival of steamers or the shipment of large cargoes, is easily imagined. Our slow passage brought us there just in time to receive all the discomforts of low water. A fleet of small boats that had been lying in wait around a point hoisted sail as soon as the harbour-master's boat pulled alongside of us, which was to them the signal that passengers were free to land. We took passage in one of these boats, but did not land until nearly midnight, five hours after leaving the ship. The cleanliness and quiet of my friend's cosy quarters were a great relief after the discomfort of the voyage.

Hoi-how has one principal street, along which most of the business is done. The town is rather straggling, having no good centre about which to cluster; a part is enclosed by a wall, and branches extend along the streams. The ten or twelve Europeans who compose the foreign community are stowed away in Chinese houses, and are only found after persistent search. The trade of the port has hardly realised the expectations awakened at its opening. Sugar, oil, and live pigs are the chief exports. Cocoa-nut ware, rattan, leather, and

other articles are shipped in smaller quantities. The junk trade, long established at other ports along the coast as well as here, still draws the main bulk of traffic in cocoa-nut, betel nuts, salt, salt fish, hides, and tallow. The principal import trade is done in opium, which comes in legitimately through the European houses, illegitimately through Chinese under foreign names, and by the usual methods of smuggling. The country is flooded with it, and its baneful effects are seen far and wide. All the officials use the drug, and in some places almost the whole male population is addicted to the opium pipe. The people, as we first meet them, seem darker than those about Canton, and are not burdened with much surplus energy.

The Hainanese dialect is here spoken in its purity, and those desirous of acquiring it are advised to secure teachers with a good King-shan accent. This dialect, which is spoken over the greater part of the island, is known among the natives as the Ke-wa, the language of the strangers. It is not, however, allied to the Hakka of the mainland. Its nearest affinity seems to be to the dialects of Amoy, or of the southern part of Formosa. We have in its native designation a constant reminder that the early settlers were exiles, banished from their home lands, to which they ever hoped to return. They were not voluntary colonists, nor were they all criminals and outlaws, but the vassals of a despotic Government, who, obeying the orders of their emperor, left their homes in the more congenial region about Fu-kiên perhaps, to occupy and develop the sparsely-peopled territory south of the sea.

The surroundings of Hoi-how are far from being unattractive. Fine walks on either side of the bay



THE COCOA-NUT PALM.

reward the pedestrian. Old monuments of various kinds attract the antiquarian. Game abounds within easy distance; snipe and teal in abundance along the beach;

deer, woodcock, and jungle fowl a few miles inland. Toward the west rise the high grounds of Ta-ying-shan, covered with groves of trees, abounding in fresh spring water, and open to the sea breeze throughout the year. This is the prospective location of the residences of the European community, when negotiations for land are brought to a successful issue; and a pleasant and healthful situation it will be. The vegetation is not specially tropical. Bamboo hedges, with the thorny rattan intertwined, line the roads; luxuriant creepers, with large attractive flowers, abound, a magnificent species of *Terminalia*, called by the natives the *p'i-p'a*, or guitar tree, so designated from the resemblance in shape of its leaves to the half-pear-shaped guitar, which, in its turn, resembles the harp of Pythagoras, from which comes the more euphonious name of harp-tree, is found in limited numbers. Its large, glistening leaves and wide-spread, finely-proportioned branches, are very ornamental. A few cocoa-nut palms lift their corrugated columns, crowned with broad, stiff leaves, and clusters of green and yellow fruit, above the lower shrubs, one group of five near the shore being especially conspicuous.

Chief among the objects of interest in this direction is the old Romanist cemetery, which covers a large part of the most attractive and valuable space on the hill. Hundreds of monuments over the graves have the cross plainly cut upon them, and the names of Chinese converts, with all the particulars of age, residence, and position given. The inscriptions on several of the Chinese tombs, as well as the size and shape of the monuments, show them to have been men of high position in the church. Con-

spicuous among the others are the tombs of three Europeans. One of these was a German, as the Latin inscription shows, who died October 9th, A.D. 1686, after being in Hainan eight years. He was evidently a man of unusual importance, his tomb being much more elaborate than the others. The other two seem to have been Portuguese, who died in 1681. Many of the Chinese tombs bear nearly the same date; and the annals of the Prefecture record a plague of unusual fatality that swept over the island about that time. The existence of such a cemetery, so finely located, with such numbers of tombs of respectable people, certainly indicates that at one time the Romanists had a large following in Hainan. The Chinese records give little or no information in the matter, but tradition says they were high in the favour not only of the people but of the mandarins as well, a Tao-tai being among their converts. It is also claimed that they had a church in the city of King-chow-fu, which has been converted into the present temple of longevity, where the officials now worship on New Year's morn, and the emperor's birthday. Still another place of worship is spoken of called the Temple of the Cross, which is now used as a heathen temple.

The Mission of the Jesuits is said to have been opened in 1630, and to have been superintended by a succession of foreign priests for half a century or more. Their flourishing work was probably overthrown at the time when the Jesuits were suppressed. It is strange, however, that from being so numerous they should have almost wholly disappeared. The number of Romanists now on the north of the island is very small, and of

those who now adhere to the faith of Rome, few, if any, are descendants of those who two centuries ago were so numerous; nor have they any very definite knowledge of their predecessors, whose tombs are so conspicuous. The present head of the Romish Mission is trying to obtain possession of the tract of land covered by these tombs, but the Chinese officials are not willing to yield up so fine a possession, even with such self-evident proofs of former right as these monuments show. Could the history of this old church in Hainan be written, it would be one of deep interest to us who, in these later times, are seeking to lay the foundations of that universal Church and kingdom that shall never end. Who will unfold the tale of their coming, their rise, their ascendancy, their day of power and prosperity, their decline, their fall, their disappearance? These mute stones, with their significant emblems and meagre inscriptions, giving hardly more than the bare facts of the existence of those whose remains they cover, tell only too little of the movement of which they are the only visible monuments that remain. No doubt proper records have been kept somewhere, which, if available, would furnish us many facts of great interest. The modern Mission, intended no doubt as a reopening of the old, ~~was~~ begun by French missionaries in 1849. Their reception was not friendly, the first who arrived being so badly beaten by the people that he died from the wounds received.

Three miles west of Hoi-how is the city of King-chow-fu, where the chief officials of the island reside. To reach it is a pleasant walk in the afternoon of an autumn day. Part of the way lies over grave-covered, barren hills,

and part between evergreen hedges. Men and women are seen riding on wheelbarrows, whose wooden wheels squeak outrageously. Many monumental arches, or rather square gateways, are met with, most of them commemorative of the virtuous lives of ladies, who, through many years of widowhood, remained faithful to the memory of their betrothed or espoused husbands. These structures are conspicuous from their ugliness; no grace or beauty is suggested. They consist of cumbrous stone slabs and pillars, set up in the stiffest manner possible. The wall of King-chow-fu, as we approach it from the north, has a picturesque effect, covered, as it is, with a mass of ferns, figs, and various creepers. The *Ficus Hanceana* spreads in a most prolific growth over the buttresses, the pale-green fruit hanging like numberless pendants over the side. Beside the Government buildings, there is not much to note within the wall. Many open spaces covered with ponds, gardens, and groves of bamboo show that the population is not pressed for room. Outside the West Gate is a busy mart, where most of the business is done. Here the trade in cocoa-nut-ware centres. The manufacture of cups, bowls, tea-services, and other articles from the shell of the cocoa-nut is an industry peculiar to this part of the island. Some of the more delicate specimens show great skill in carving and silvering. The shops and houses are all very low, it being necessary, even for a short man, to stoop under the eaves as he enters the door. Protection against the typhoons, for which the island is noted, is one reason given for this mode of construction. In the city, and along the road thither, are many indications of a past prosperity which the

present does not equal. There is a woful lack of enterprise apparent ; a stupor caused by opium, perhaps, which paralyses all their energies.

Our preparations for an extended journey through the interior being completed, we set out with our little caravan towards the east. Sedan chairs are dispensed with as an expensive luxury, and an impediment to the proper study of the country. A few minutes after starting we pass some curious salt-works, where troughs of sand receive the sea-water from which the salt is made. After successive strainings through the sand, it is boiled in sheds erected for the purpose, and salt of a good colour and saline quality produced. We cross a little high-tide bay in a ferry-boat. Flocks of snipe fly up as we approach the shore, and four or five cranes of great size and attractive plumage rise over our heads. A grove of cacti on the farther side affords a fair protection from the sun to people waiting for the boat. The banks and road-side fields are quite aglow with the reddish-purple periwinkle, which seems indigenous here. Ascending to a higher level, we catch the fine sea breeze, and proceed with comfort to the first halting-place, in front of a temple with two grand trees of the genus *Terminalia* in the foreground. The road thence leads for a time in a winding course through straggling villages with bamboo groves about them, which shut out all views of the surrounding country.

At one of these villages we stop for tiffin, and in the dingy little room where the table is set with refreshments we prepare to make the best of it. When all is ready for us to partake, a sedan chair coming from the opposite

direction stops in front of the inn; a well-dressed Chinaman gets out, enters the room where we are sitting, takes his position on the couch at one side, and without a word of apology prepares to smoke his opium. A farmer on the opposite side, who had been deterred by our presence, encouraged by the man in the long tunic, prepares his pipe, and before we are aware of it the sickening fumes of opium are poured upon us from either side. We retreat to the open air, and finish our tiffin under a wretched straw-awning, where the wind blows the black particles of decayed straw in showers upon us as we eat.

We meet many coolies with salt fish, betel nuts, sucking-pigs, and other products of the island, but are most interested in two men who have stopped on the outskirts of the village. They carry large round baskets with several sections one above the other, each section divided into eight or ten small compartments, with little doors opening on the outside. The chirping of the captives tells us that a well-stocked aviary is passing by. They are mostly brown birds, with a lively, pleasant note, which abound in the interior, and these men, after weeks of work among the hills and mountains inland, are bringing out their one or two hundred birds, which find a ready market in Hoi-how. We cross a sandy plain with fields of sweet potatoes, peanuts, and sugar-cane on either side, and come to a little gulch with peculiar clay sides, worn into odd shapes by the action of water at the time of heavy rains. A short distance thence we reach a rocky hill covered with great black boulders of volcanic origin, from which we descend into a swampy vale, crossed by a good stone bridge, which intersects a lotus pond of

unusual dimensions. Mounting the low hill on the farther side, we wind through masses of black, rough, rock-like scoria, some of it built into walls to enclose the fields and gardens, and some used as the material for constructing the low dungeon-like houses of the villages.

Under some fine banyans we stop to rest and gather the villagers about us. Everybody is chewing sugar-cane. The absence of tea, the usual beverage on the mainland, is quickly remarked and severely felt by our Canton coolies. Its substitutes are spring water, congee water, and the juicy sugar-cane. We choose the first, being careful to filter it when any doubts of its purity arise. The Chinese choose the other two, usually beginning with the congee water, and continuing indefinitely at the sugar-cane. A few minutes' conversation reveals the fact that the people of this and many of the surrounding villages speak a peculiar Loi dialect. The origin of this patois is one of the interesting questions that will come up for solution as the history of the people is studied more thoroughly. The data at present possessed are too meagre to furnish any very definite theory; this much, however, is known, that it is the speech of a particular section of the people, who are evidently distinct from the Chinese, and are also quite different from the Aborigines in the centre of the island. Their dress is somewhat like the Chinese, but in stature, features, and speech they are very unlike them. They are full Chinese subjects, mingle freely in business, intermarry with the Hainanese, eat the same food, live in the same kind of houses, and seem identical with them in many respects, yet they are certainly distinct. The persistence with which they hold

to their peculiar dialect is remarkable. Surrounded on every side by Chinese, in constant intercourse with them in many ways, the great majority of them speak only their native Loi; while the tribes of Aborigines in the interior, with much less reason, we should think, speak the Hainanese to a great extent. The most plausible theory as to the origin of these people is that they are the descendants of the Mias-tsz, brought ages ago from the highlands of Kwang-tung and Kwangsi to act as mediators between the Chinese and the wild Les of the interior. A mixture of races has occurred, Chinese blood being added in some measure, and a people differing from all others on the island is the result. The name Loi, by which they are everywhere known, would indicate that they must have, in some way, come into very close union with the Aborigines of the island. They may have absorbed one tribe of the original Les, and adopted their language, or the adoption of the language may have been a conciliatory measure. At present they are quite distinct in physique, language, and customs from any of the Le tribes further south. These tribes, however, differ very much among themselves, so that too much may be made of this dissimilarity. Whether they resemble sufficiently any of the tribes of the Mias-tsz on the mainland to warrant the belief in a common origin or not cannot now be determined. There is a colony of these Loies in Ko-chow in the district of Shek-shing who retain their peculiar speech, and if report can be believed, are not on the most friendly terms with the surrounding population. They are probably an offshoot from those on the north of Hainan. Our interest had been awakened by previous

accounts of these people, and as they surrounded us I set to work to collect a vocabulary. The list of words and their approximate sounds secured, and subsequently increased, may be the nucleus of something useful in the future, but is too fragmentary as yet to serve any scientific purpose.

As to the physical features of the north of the island, the chief interest is in its geological formation. The rocks which cover the surface so thickly are evidently of volcanic origin. They are hard and black, in many places filled with cavities caused by bubbles of air in the molten mass from which they came. The source of this volcanic matter was probably in the "Hummocks," two prominent hills to the left of us. Those who have visited them say there is evidence of their being the craters of extinct volcanoes, but the history of the island records no eruption, so that this immense supply of igneous rocks must have been thrown out from the bottom of these silent hills in prehistoric times. The people have recognised the generous provision of nature, and used these rocks in the construction of their houses, which have a massive but not very cheerful aspect. The thick dark walls and low roofs may suggest much solid comfort, especially in the prospect of frequent typhoons, but are not very pleasing to the eye.

As we continue our journey the road leads between large fields of sugar-cane with pea-nuts interspersed. Everywhere the people are chewing sugar-cane with the utmost energy, the roads, streets, and inn yards being covered with the refuse. Bevvies of women and girls are digging up pea-nuts in the fields, and start like frightened

birds at our appearance. As evening draws on they gather up their baskets and hooks, and wend their way to the villages, their spirits unsubdued by the long day's work, if we may judge from the constant chatter and laughing they keep up, and the way they chase each other over the newly upturned fields. They seem a healthy, happy set, which is more than can be said of the men, enchained as they are by the opium habit. Our first day's march, in which we travel seventeen miles, ends at the village of Lung-shan, beside which a little stream, spanned by a stone bridge, finds its way down to the sea. We are welcomed by the more respectable citizens, among whom appears a venerable village elder, an octogenarian who has never seen any of our kind before. The country we have traversed is well cultivated, the soil is good, and the various crops yield a fair increase. The villages are numerous and substantial, and the people most friendly and civil, none of the insulting epithets so common on the mainland being heard. It is unnecessary to dwell upon the discomforts or otherwise of the dark and dingy inn where the first night was spent. It was neither better nor worse than many of its kind, which are the only accommodations afforded to travellers through the island.

Although an early hour was set for starting in the morning, a large proportion of the village gathered to see us off. Our attention was called to two oxen which they said had been slain for us. This was a compliment altogether too overwhelming. We had been previously informed of the beef-eating propensities of the Hainanese, and soon learned that to supply the wants of the market town and six adjacent villages several oxen were killed

daily. A pleasant walk of two miles past several prosperous villages brought us to an inlet from the sea running up to the district city of Ching-mai. The air was fresh and wholesome; flocks of birds darted in and out of the hedges; groups of large white storks were flying over the fields, scores of magpies stalked over the mounds, so tame that they would not move until we were within a few feet of them. Taking passage in a small boat, we sailed comfortably up the stream for three miles to our destination. On our right a salt marsh stretched for some distance toward a line of low bluffs, where villages were set with groups of palm trees about them. A bridal procession was crossing the inlet to one of these villages; as they landed the high tide made it necessary for them to wade several rods along the submerged path; the bride's chair, swaying uncomfortably as the coolies slipped on the uncertain way, threatened the fair one so carefully concealed behind the curtains with an involuntary bath. Landing at the stone jetty, we look in vain for the town or any sign of traffic. Ascending the bluff by the path which is almost choked in places by the profusion of vines and shrubs, we come to a square tower, and soon after enter the west gate of this quaint, little, old city. It is scarcely a mile in circumference, oval in shape, with a most dilapidated wall, pierced by three gates east, west, and south. Not more than half the space inside is occupied by the houses, some of the open portions being covered with a perfect jungle. Nature has triumphed over man, and uses the broken walls and ruined houses to support her luxuriant flora; and as if grateful for the help which these ruins give to the

innumerable vines that need support, she has covered the whole mass with a wonderful garment of flowering vines, some robust, with large, gorgeous flowers, others of finer texture, with delicate blossoms to correspond. Along the north wall is a long barrier of thorny shrubs, more difficult to pass than the best laid brick and mortar. Toward the east a variety of *Thunbergias* and *Convolvuli* cover the wall near the examination hall. One section is completely concealed for several rods by glistening *Raphidopheras*, whose strong and sinuous growth extends over supports of lower shrubs as well as the battlements of the wall, and whose broad and deeply pinnate leaves spread out like a great cool awning. Not far from these the night-blooming cereus spreads its stiff joints in all the glory of its hundreds of gorgeous flowers, some half decayed, others in bud ready to burst in the evening, while clematis, rattan, and a vine with a bright fruit, in colour and shape like an orange, covered with thorns, hang thickly over the wall and tower above the east gate. A weed-like creeper with yellow flowers covers the whole eastern section of the southern wall. Inside and out the town is a wilderness of luxuriant vegetation. Palms and papayas rise conspicuously above the vines, and red peppers, growing wild in great abundance, vigorous plants six and eight feet high, fill the open spaces among the trees to the east.

On the northern wall is a small structure called the "New Sea-view Tower," from which the surrounding country may be seen to great advantage; a few miles distant to the north stretches the sea; to the south-east rise the Hummocks, and four miles south-west lies

a line of low hills called the "Variegated Spring Ridge." All the rest is a dull slightly rolling plain like a wold or prairie. For miles to the south and west little or no sign of cultivation appears. The rolling plain is covered over with long grass and low shrubs. The country seems capable of cultivation, but the people or the enterprise are lacking. The inhabitants of the town received us with civil indifference. The whole inn was placed at our disposal, so that we were comparatively comfortable. The magistrate ignored our presence, and most of the men seemed more devoted to their opium pipes than to anything else. The ravages of the drug were evident on every side. Our attention was directed to a notice posted up in a prominent place, to the effect that in passing to and fro through the streets men and women must be careful to keep apart. A rather sluggish stream, coming from the direction of the Hummocks, flows along the south side of the town. It is spanned by two bridges, the lower one of which is rather a fine structure, built just above a fall in the stream, over which the water pours abruptly a distance of fifty or sixty feet. Near the end of the bridge is a remarkable stone pagoda, almost conical in shape, broad at the base, but tapering rapidly to a point.

CHAPTER XVIII.

OVER THE ROLLING PLAINS OF LAM-KO.



OUR course, as we leave Ching-mai, is over the bridge described in the last chapter, and leads us in a south-west direction across some low hills of heavy clay, which the slight rain has rendered very slippery. Flowering creepers in great abundance festoon the hedges along our path, conspicuous among them being a delicate white species of *Thunbergia*, with leaves of a velvety texture. Two miles of rather hard walking bring us to "Thunder" station, where refreshments are laid out to tempt us, but we press on another two miles to the market of "Many Peaks," where a few hours are spent. The name is peculiar, and seems to have been given to mark the absence of peaks rather than their presence. The hill of "Variegated Spring" is passed to the left, fine views of the sea greet us on the right, a deep bay running inland at this point. We find excellent water, clear and sweet, in this town. The houses are all built of the black rock referred to above, low roofed, and very solid looking. Market is held on alternate days, but little else than salt fish and vegetables is sold. A few tens of *kooks* were readily disposed of.

Soon after leaving this town we come to a small stream flowing in a deep channel down to the estuary at the foot of the hills, and spanned by a substantial bridge. Several large trees spread a delightful shade, under which a dozen or more travellers are resting, while the wind, strong and fresh from the sea, blows health with every breath. A queer little roadside inn stands at the end of the bridge. Its mud walls and straw roof scarcely suffice to keep out the rain. Straw beds, soft-boiled rice, and congee water, are prepared for the rest and refreshment of travellers. We continue our journey another hour over the rolling plain to the "Burnt Station," where we take our noon-day rest on the soft green grass under a fine old tree. A little straw-thatched cottage is scarcely an apology for the inn supposed to exist. To the right opens a natural lane bordered by high hedges of bamboo and other plants. It stretches away like an avenue leading to a park, and is gay with a variety of floral decorations. Some cocoa-nut palms furnish us with half-ripe fruit, from which we take our first draught of the new milk fresh from the shell. The young fruit, whose outer husk is of a golden yellow, yields a good quart of the liquid, which we are eager to taste; but instead of the nectar we had anticipated, we find an acid juice, raw and flavourless, which, after the addition of a little sugar, becomes mildly pleasant. We are made aware of the fact that this is not the season to luxuriate in cocoa-nut milk, which pleasure is reserved for the months of spring and early summer, when the beverage is said to be truly delightful.

Our way soon leads us to a bridgeless stream, where

the choice of wading, or being ferried over on the backs of our coolies, is presented to us; we choose the latter, and are soon on the elevated, undulating plain again. The country is monotonous, but not unattractive; the highest hills we cross do not rise more than one or at most two hundred feet above the sea level. There are few trees to be seen, only rank wild grass and insignificant shrubs, which bend before the wind like the waves of the sea. It seems an ideal grazing country, capable of supporting great numbers of sheep or larger cattle, but only a few small herds are seen. The presence of some concealed from sight is indicated by the monotonous clang of wooden bells. We saw no game, although the place seemed admirably fitted to afford convenient covert. This facility for concealment may account for our seeing nothing in a section where game was supposed to abound. Here and there clumps of cocoa-nut palms are seen towering in fine proportions above all else. They are the insignia of the island, its chief and most conspicuous product, its banner scarcely ever out of sight, waving free and proudly over all. Along the water courses the caryota palm rises stiff and stately with its broad and much-frayed leaves. Tumac, rattan, honeysuckle, callicarpa, and other familiar plants, intermingled with some new and striking ones, ~~and~~. At this point we see the first of the buffalo carts much used on the island—great, clumsy things with two immense solid wooden wheels, which cut deep tracks in the soil. They are usually drawn by water buffaloes hitched or tandem, and each cart has a carrying capacity of about half a ton.

As we approach the market of the "Deeply Wooded Hills," the most extensive groves yet seen appear toward the south. A nearer view shows them to be the woodlands encircling several large villages, in close connection with the market, making the name of the place more than a mere fancy. The approach to Sim-to-a is more attractive than the town itself. A delightful fragrance from some flowering plants, which, unfortunately, we could not find, filled the air as we drew near. Two fine trees of the fig family on either side of the road, with good stone seats underneath, afforded a convenient resting-place. A fringe of trees along an open field, some with leaves of a silvery under surface, tossed by the wind so that silver gleams flashed through the green, and clusters of buff-coloured flowers, formed an attractive feature in the landscape. The town consists of one long street running east and west, with a cross street running south. Quantities of sucking-pigs are reared here and sent to Hoi-how, the little fellows, four or five cattiees weight, bringing three hundred cash each. Secured in loosely-woven bamboo packets, they are packed four or five together, end-wise, with their noses up, in the strong round bamboo baskets peculiar to this district.

We put up at the best inn in the town. As far as our observation goes, all the innkeepers in Hainan are women. This may be an indication of their independence, another proof of which is the fact that many of the women carry a money purse, from which they supply their husbands with spending money. I frequently noticed that in buying a book or a little medicine or some article from a passing seller, the husband had to

apply to the wife for the cash, and, what was more significant, did not always get it. Our hostess at this place was very sharp and active. She took no rest from morning till night, and tried to make others follow the same rule. She was a perfect termagant, lashing with her never silent tongue all who came near. She had a husband, a pitiful handful of wizened humanity, who did nothing but smoke opium and eat the food his wife prepared in ample quantities for him, meekly bending to the storms of abuse which experience had told him were inevitable. No chance of increasing her hoard of cash escaped her. One of our Canton coolies objected to the soft-boiled rice, and proceeded to cook his own, which brought on a fearful outburst of wrath at the prospect of losing a few cash. Her son, a boy of eighteen, but stunted by ill-treatment until he was scarcely larger than a child of eight, was sent to bring an extra lamp for our room, which he brought, but soon came back weeping, with the information that his mother would kill him if he did not return the lamp, no such extravagance being allowed in the establishment. The people in this town speak mostly the Loi dialect, but understand Hainanese, and a few of them Cantonese, which was a great comfort to me. Books were taken in almost every house and shop, and several schools showed that education was not altogether neglected; but the opium dens were more numerous than the schools, and the habit of smoking seemed almost universal among the men.

Our course from this point continued in a south-west direction over a rolling country composed of red clay soil. Groves of trees appeared on either side breaking the

monotony of the plain. We followed the ox-cart road, meeting a number of the clumsy vehicles with tandems of the equally clumsy water-oxen. One and a half miles out from the "Deeply Wooded Hills," we passed the boundary of the Ching-mai and Lam-ko districts, marked by stone pillars, and shortly after stopped to rest in a peculiar arbour made of the trunks of cactus plants, straw thatched, with the crooked bodies of some cactus trees for seats. All the roads are lined with the cactus, which makes an excellent hedge, but grows so fast that it soon chokes the way unless it is constantly trimmed. Waste land is so plentiful here, that rather than take the trouble to trim the cactus hedges and repair the old road, the people strike out into new ones as soon as the old become impassable.

After several miles' travel, we come to the little market town of Shün-tó, where an excellent inn affords us clean and comfortable quarters free from noise, with a private entrance in the rear. The massive woodwork of these houses is noteworthy. No pine or other soft wood is available on the island, so that the woodwork of the houses is of solid hard timber, much of it well dressed and polished. It gives a rich appearance to the room to see the hard wood pillars, the doors with broad panels of polished teak, the chairs, tables, and beds of materials which only wealth can secure on the mainland. The number of inns and the accommodation they afford shows that the aggregate of travel through the year is great. In this little town are a dozen inns or more. The people all speak Loi, and have a different cast of features from those in the other towns passed through. They are very dark in complexion.

with deep-set eyes and a very un-Chinese look. At the back of the town is a small lakelet, and on a grassy islet rising on the spongy soil in the midst of it, were several fine cranes of a silver-grey hue, unlike any seen before. As we continue our journey the land improves. Good roads make comfortable walking, and people in the fields show that the land is being utilised. As a picture of rural peace and harmony we see a boy ploughing, with several magpies following close at his heels, and crows flying leisurely about without fear of being molested. Busy hands are digging up the pea-nuts, and rows of ox-carts are waiting to receive and carry them to the villages. The transition from these pleasant scenes to the wretched little town of Sám-yen, where we breakfast, is not the most agreeable. We leave it as soon as possible, and continue our way still over rolling country, now more thickly studded with villages.

Signs of a larger population and increased cultivation of the soil appear on every hand as we approach the town of Ne-pe. To the north-east lies a fine plain covered with rice just ready for the sickle; many reapers are at work, with scores of snow-white egrets following them to pick up the grain that falls. Beyond Ne-pe the soil is sandy, and mostly given up to the cultivation of rice. A rich plain, eight or ten miles long and four miles wide, is covered with golden grain. Scores of reapers are busy gathering in the harvest, buffalo carts are waiting to carry off the grain; paddy birds, crows, and magpies eagerly follow to share in the harvest, and great flocks of ducks riot in the flooded fields. In several places the path is submerged, giving us some inconvenience in avoid-

ing the over-flowing water. For some time our eyes have been watching the groves of trees, with isolated palms looming up that mark the situation of the city of Lam-ko. We approach it from the east through a village, passing under a large monumental gateway covered with lichen, which obscures the inscriptions, and soon after under a smaller one of similar construction. A river flows along the south and east sides of the city, the muddy water rushing in a swift current to the sea, a few miles distant. A little octagonal pagoda stands at the end of a good stone bridge, over which we pass to the east gate of the city. The main street runs from the east to the west gate; the city is oval in shape, and somewhat larger than Ching-mai. Four gates in the wall, which are never shut, might indicate a remarkably peaceful state of affairs, were it not that the condition of the walls renders the closing of the gates a work of supererogation. No good houses appear; even the magistrate's residence is in a very dilapidated state. A gaudy Confucian temple, with college attached, in the centre of the town, attracts attention. It has been constructed with great care, and a little efficient superintendence would keep it in good repair. The attractions of the opium pipe overcome all other claims with those in charge, and the fine building is suffering for want of care. Within the west gate is a large open space, occupied, in part, by rice fields.

Lam-ko is the centre of a rich grain district, the rice lands stretching for miles to the north-east and south. To the west the land rises gradually to a prominent hill, and as soon as a certain level is reached the red clay reappears. On our way to this hill, called the Ko-shan-

ling, we passed a noisy company holding some ceremonies in a mat shed, preparatory to ploughing the field, to secure a prosperous season. Along the base of the hill and up its sides are several villages, closely encircled by bamboo groves. The hill is on a point jutting out into the sea, and from the top, which is perhaps six or seven hundred feet above the sea, the whole surrounding country is laid before the eye. The strong breeze from the sea made it difficult for us to stand. A peculiar temple stands on the highest point nearest the sea. It is built entirely, roof and all, of the loose stones scattered on the hill-top, and is regarded as an object of great interest by the people. From this point the outline of the coast toward Tam-chow is seen; a deep inlet on the south runs up from the sea. Toward the south-east a line of hills appears, the outlying spurs of the higher ranges inland. Near the top of the hill are springs of good water and a small pond, where the cattle from the villages come to drink, and the women to wash clothes.

On our return from the hill an invitation to visit the magistrate was awaiting us. He had heard of our expedition, and immediately inquired if the object of our visit to the hill was to settle the "fung-shui" of the place. He told us that not long before several foreigners had landed in a boat, gone to the top of the hill, and made observations of some kind. They were probably from some gun-boat engaged in surveying the coast, and their object was no doubt to fix the position of this point for use in the charts. Much similar work has been done of late years to the great benefit of all who travel along the coast. It is remarkable that with all the commerce

that has passed up and down the coast during the last half century, the actual position of Hainan had not been determined until a few years ago. The position given in the charts was not less than twelve miles in error. This has now been corrected, and accurate surveys of the whole coast are being gradually obtained. The Lam-ko magistrate was a pleasant old gentleman from Kiang-su province. He looked upon his position as a kind of exile, but was certainly more fortunate than some of his colleagues in the smaller districts of King-chow-fu.

The people in the town were very friendly. Many of them spoke Cantonese, and a good number of books were disposed of. Several villages to west and east were visited, in one of which I was taken to a school where the discipline was such that my entrance made no break in the routine of study; after one glance the boys went on with their lessons as though no one were present. In this district are found the largest numbers of that peculiar people who speak the Loi dialect; most of the villages are occupied by them, and their patois is often called the Lam-ko dialect. Few of them are to be met with outside of Lam-ko and Ching-mai districts. In enumerating the various tribes of the Les on the island, they are frequently spoken of as the Punti Les, literally native Les, Punti being, however, the usual designation of the Chinese in the south of China. In dress they differ slightly from the Chinese, the outer tunic being shorter, and the shoes of a different pattern. The women wear peculiar earrings, large brass hooks, in shape like staples, and others like great hoops, with long pointed heads extending above the lobe of the ear.

Leaving Lām-kô, we turn our backs upon the sea, and direct our course south-east, toward the centre of the island. We follow the general direction of the river that flows down from the hills, crossing it several times. For the first four miles the way leads over a level plain, the road submerged in places, rice being the chief production of the land. On little patches of higher ground, mostly covered with graves, small herds of cattle are feeding, watch being kept over them by boys who sit behind the hedges, almost lost in the great straw coats that protect them from the fresh wind blowing. A well-dressed man riding on a buffalo drew our attention as something new. Passing near a large village to the east, with twenty-five palms to mark its location, we come suddenly upon the market town of Mai-to, the one long street filled with busy throngs, salt-fish and vegetables being the principal articles for sale. We become at once the centre of attraction, a dense crowd gathering, each one eager to catch a glimpse of so unusual a spectacle, making it difficult for us to proceed. My friend found out an old acquaintance whom he had relieved on his previous journey, and under his direction we were soon conducted to a comfortable lodging-place. The people were eager for books and medicines, which we supplied as quickly and fully as possible.

Our intention was to leave early the next morning, but the people returning from the market had spread the news of our arrival, and the fame of my friend's medical skill through the villages far and near, so that on the following morning our doors were besieged by an eager and impatient throng, gentry and common people,

scholars and labourers, all came together, some in chairs, some on horses, until the street was filled with their equipages. • Cards in great numbers, with most polite and flattering requests for attendance, requests in which whole villages united, signed by the elders, were showered upon the modest doctor. It was impossible to attend to them all at once, and almost equally difficult to follow the exact order in which the requests were presented. We gave up the day to them, locked the inner door, and set a guard, admitting only a few at a time. Over one hundred were treated and prescribed for, and many sent away for whom nothing could be done. The readiness with which they took the foreigner's medicine and submitted to operations was surprising. The number of villages represented shows the country to be very populous, and the appearance of the people indicated a good degree of prosperity. Nearly all of them spoke Lpi, an interpreter being necessary when conversing with them. We received only respect, friendliness, and pressing invitations to remain among them. We were obliged to decline all such invitations, and, in spite of their entreaties, left for Ma-ting, five miles distant, where we hoped to spend a quiet Sabbath. • • •

The way thither is through a level country, with some low bluffs along the river. We crossed the stream in little punts, and, ascending the farther bank, passed through an attractive grove of young trees. Deputations from villages along the way met us begging for the doctor's attendance, often in incurable cases. Towns and hamlets on every side, surrounded by fine groves of bamboos, banyans, jack-fruit, and other attractive trees.

gave a pleasing aspect to the landscape. It was nearly dark when we reached our stopping-place, and some difficulty was encountered in securing a suitable inn. We were taken to several which were too small, but finally found one which had room enough, but was rather too public. It was constructed in the same manner as most of the other houses in the town, of small bamboos placed upright, and interlaced at intervals with thongs of the same material, the whole plastered over with red clay, and covered with a straw roof. When all the doors were shut, numberless openings appeared on every side, through which curious eyes were peering to see the first men who had ever visited their town. Unpleasant quarters, the heat of the sun, and crowds of curious people, especially boys, combined to make Sunday an uncomfortable day.

On Monday the market was held, and thousands of people thronged the little town, bringing all manner of produce for sale, sweet potatoes and yams in abundance, a variety of vegetables, grain, sucking-pigs, small bamboos for building houses, tobacco, salt-beef, and salt-fish. There was very little pork, and no fruit except papayas. The quantity of beef consumed is astonishing to one who thinks of the Chinese mainly as a pork-fed people. An early walk through the town showed six fine beeves already slaughtered. The meat is of a superior quality, and very cheap. Most of those killed are young cattle, in fine condition, as the tallow is one of the chief sources of profit. This, with the hides, horns, and bones, the latter to be used as a fertiliser, are more important than the flesh. The scarcity of pork for sale

is due, in a measure, to the constant supply of beef, which the procuring of hides and tallow throws on the market at cheaper rates, but is mainly due to the great export trade in live pigs which has sprung up in late years, making it a more profitable business to rear them and send them to Hoi-how for shipment to Hong-kong than to consume them at home. The people, though evidently not very literary, took the books offered for sale very readily. The use of a small temple was secured, and the medical work carried on with great enthusiasm. The eagerness of the people for the doctor's help was fully equal to that at Mai-to, and the number of those treated was greater by one-half. The Loi being the prevailing dialect, an interpreter was needed most of the time, an intelligent young man volunteering his services for this purpose. Among those who came was a family of respectable people who spoke Cantonese. This roused my curiosity, and upon inquiring I found them to be from the town of Pau-she, ten miles south, where a colony of Ko-chow people settled nearly two hundred years ago. The place now contains about five thousand people, who have preserved the language and customs of their forefathers intact. Their speech is almost pure Cantonese. This is another proof of how these different elements of the population, while coming into constant contact with each other, preserve their own identity, each remaining a distinct people, and confirms the theory that the Loi-speaking people, who hold so rigidly to their peculiar dialect, are quite distinct in origin from any of the other inhabitants of the island.

An early hour was fixed for starting the next day, and

as we stepped out of the inn by the light of the morning moon, we saw three men who had come twenty miles to see the doctor. They had missed the way and travelled all night, and were now waiting at the door of the inn for his appearance. Similar instances occurred in the following days; in one case a father carrying his child forty miles in hope of getting relief. At 4 A.M. we were fully under way, the bright moon overhead shedding abundance of light. A heavy dew was falling, which soon turned into a soaking mist, that obscured the rising sun for several hours. My friend's Chinese assistant amused us by hoisting an umbrella, to avoid moonstroke we said at first; but the wisdom of his course was soon apparent, as our clothes began to hang damp and heavy about us. Three miles out we crossed a brook, and soon after the river and its chief tributary, which run near together, and unite a short distance below.

A pleasant walk of ten miles, through a country where a good harvest was in process of being gathered in, brought us at 8 A.M. to the little market town of Hôulang, where we waited impatiently the preparations for breakfast. The town has but one street, with broad sheds in front of the shops on either side, and a narrow, open path in the middle. All the people speak the Loi dialect. Several large beeves were slaughtered, and we can testify as to the excellent quality of the meat. Rolls of strong white cotton cloth woven in the villages, a very fragrant kind of tobacco, beans, rice, papayas, and immense bamboo baskets, four and five feet high, for storing rice, were offered for sale.

Leaving the town at noon, we caught the welcome sight

of hills, much higher than any yet seen, some of them covered with trees to their tops. Behind these hills rose mountain ranges of varying height. One conspicuous peak, isolated from the others, rose like a great dome to the south, a prominent landmark by which to direct our course. Passing rapidly the rich rice fields, with the reapers, ox-carts, ducks, and wild fowl all helping to gather in the harvest, we came to the first low range of hills. It is thickly covered with vegetation, the road being completely arched over in places by the canopy of trees, interlaced with flowering vines; wild camellias and other flowering shrubs adorned the hedges; new varieties of ornamental creepers appeared in great abundance; a white convolvulus, with a profusion of blossoms, another kind with hairy leaves and calyx and pinkish-purple flowers; others well shaped, creamy white, with a rich purple centre set among glossy leaves, with a white velvety under surface. Wooded hills with villages set against them appear. Descending this line of hills, another small rice plain is crossed before we stop to rest on the slope above a little straw hut, under a grove of graceful liquid-amber trees, which now begin to appear in abundance. A few miles more, and we begin to ascend another range somewhat higher than the last. Cattle are grazing on the slopes, cultivated fields stretch along the foot and to our right; as we near the summit, the finest woodland scene we have yet met greets us. Tall trees in magnificent proportions rise above the smaller growth, many of them new to us, but none the less attractive.

From the summit of the ridge we get the first good view of the hill-country we are about to enter, and the

prospect is charming. Such variety of form, and pleasing combination of hill and plain, was not suspected as we journeyed over the lowlands, and we are ready to enjoy it with a keener relish if possible, because of the contrast with the tame and quiet districts left behind. Along the ridge on which we stand are the remains of fortifications thrown up by the Hakka insurgents in the rebellion a few years ago, when they made a successful stand against the Lam-ko troops. This Hakka was a striking, we might almost say characteristic, episode in the history of the island. These earthworks are witnesses of their turbulent but courageous spirit. The hands that raised them, however, are scattered in exile or moulder with the soil. Deferring particulars of the Hakka occupancy of the island until we have seen more of this district, we proceed down the gentle slope, one and a half miles to the town of Wo-she, where we make a halt of two days.

CHAPTER XIX.

ENTERING THE INTERIOR HILL COUNTRY.



HAVING reached Wo-she, we felt that the duller portion of the journey was behind us, and prepared to enjoy the new, varied, and striking scenes before us. We soon found a comfortable inn, a long narrow building with a succession of apartments, whose arrangements showed the thrift of the owners. Facing the street was an ordinary shop, on one side of which were several counters let out to small traders on market days; the middle and main section was set apart for guests, and the rear was occupied by the family, which seemed to be of fair proportions, if one might judge by the number of girls and women that peered around the corners to get a glimpse of the strange guests, and scurried away as soon as they were observed. Behind all was an open space enclosed with flowers and fruit trees, piles of firewood, and sundry household and farming utensils. From this enclosure a gateway led out to the hill, against which the town is built, where barricades of trees remained to show some of the means of defence when war disturbed the natural quiet of the place. The town itself is of small dimensions, with one broad street running from end to end, in the centre of

which stand • booths occupied by itinerant traders on market days. Five temples, two of which are large and showy, comprise the public buildings. It is the residence of the Wo-she-sz (small mandarin), who quite ignored our presence, and is the last official station of the Chinese in this direction toward the interior.

The surroundings of the town are very attractive. A number of cocoa-nut palms, set against groves of larger trees, such as liquid-amber, castanopsis, and wide-spreading banyans, produced a fine effect. To the east rises a fine wooded hill, covered with a variety of trees and plants in great profusion. Trees of immense body and lofty height, their trunks encircled by sturdy creepers, which, spreading out their twining arms, hang in festoons from branch to branch and from trunk to trunk, making passage through the wood a most difficult performance. Nest ferns (*Asplenium nidus*) of perfect shape and unusual diameter grow abundantly on the moist and vine-girt bodies of the trees, and in the forks of their branches. After much struggling to force a way through the tangled vegetation, we reach the top, and standing on the ruins of some earthworks, mementoes of the last local • disturbance, see the • surrounding country to great advantage. Wood-clad hills and valleys, stretches of good rice land, and broad extents of shrub-grown pasture fields, with roads leading in all directions to the numerous villages, present a fair picture of rural peace and quiet. The most striking • feature in the landscape is a group of hills to the south, called the Pak-shek, or White Stone Ridge, whose jagged walls, of white-coloured rock, rise abruptly from the midst of a

heavy covering of dark-green woodland. It is a conspicuous object for many miles, and lies in the way to the valley of Fán-kai, well known over the island as the place where the decisive battle that ended the Hakka troubles some years ago, was fought. Beyond the White Stone Ridge rise the outlines, but dim as yet, of the higher ranges in the unexplored interior.

At Wo-she we meet a new element in the population, the Hakkas, who occupy a rich and attractive belt of country, lying between the older Chinese settlers along the sea shore, and the Aborigines in the mountains. The thrift and enterprise of the Hakka emigrant from the north is well illustrated in the history of the colony in the interior of Hainan. About one hundred and twenty years ago two Hakkas from the north-east of the province came to Hainan, and pushed their way into the interior. In the neighbourhood of the great hill Sha-mo-ling they found unoccupied land well adapted to farming and grazing. They took up their residence there, and soon began to prosper. After a few years they sent for their families, and the report of their good fortune induced others to follow, until a goodly settlement was formed. From this small beginning they have spread in numbers and in the acquisition of territory until they occupy, wholly or in part, a district some forty miles in length by fifteen in breadth. Their number is said by some of their leading men to be about 20,000, centring around the towns of Ling-lun, Wo-she, No-tai, Nam-fung, and Lok-ki. By patient industry and economy they have become fairly prosperous, and by avoiding collision with both Chinese and Aborigines, they are on friendly terms.

with both. They retain their own language and customs, and refer to their home across the sea, where the tombs and temples of their ancestors are.

The father of the colony is honoured with a tomb near the place where he first settled, where the position of the great hill Sha-mo-ling, the course of the stream that flow from it, and the whole conformation of the surrounding country, indicate a most auspicious location, if the diagram showed us may be believed. These people are called the Lo-haks, or "Old Hakkas," and they showed us great friendliness and civility during our brief stay in their district. My friend's colporteur being a Hakka from the mainland, felt much at home among them; and through him there came to me a pressing invitation from a village ten miles distant from Wo-she to visit and instruct them in the doctrines of Christianity. Their friendly disposition toward us as missionaries, the hospitality offered to our colporteur, the eagerness with which they purchased Christian books, and the desire expressed by many of them to receive special instruction, was one of the most cheering episodes of our journey, and gives much promise for the future.

While clinging closely to their own language, they also speak Hainanese, and to some extent the other dialects of the island, and the language of the Aborigines. They are called the "Old Hakkas" to distinguish them from the "San-Hak," or "New Hakkas," who came to the island about twenty years ago. These belonged to the turbulent bands that caused such wide-spread disorder and desolation in the districts of San-ning.

Yang-ping, and San-hing, and were driven out in the beginning of the reign of Tung-Chi. Drawn perhaps by the affinity of a common name and language, they settled near the older Hakkas, but, unlike them, whose peaceful policy was the main source of their prosperity, they soon began a system of robbery and oppression. From the Chinese of Lam-ko, on the one hand, and the Les on the other, they wrested cattle and lands until the country rose up in arms against them.

The people of Lam-ko, unused to fight, were helpless before them, and the soldiers sent by the magistrate were repeatedly repulsed. It was not until a special force of trained soldiers under a general of some distinction was sent, that they were subdued and driven from their stronghold in the valley of Fan-k'ai. The slaughter in the battle fought at this place was great, but the executions that followed exceeded the number slain in battle, while all that remained alive were ordered to leave the island on pain of death. Many traces of this brief and bloody episode remain in the places occupied by this short-lived colony. Under direction of the officials, they were separated into small companies, and transported to various places on the mainland. The number killed and transported has been estimated as high as 10,000. This, however, is probably in excess of the actual number. When defeated, many of them escaped to the hills, and, being outlawed by the Government, joined with the plundering bands of the Les, and have been a scourge to the country ever since. The Old Hakkas refrained from any open recognition of the New Hakkas, but were well known to be in

sympathy with them, and gave them substantial help in many ways; the authorities, however, in the absence of any overt act, wisely overlooked their secret aid, and in the edict ordering the removal of all the "New Hakkas," were careful to state that all the "Old" were to remain unmolested.

From Wo-she our way led over rolling pasture lands to No-t'ai, twenty miles south in the heart of the Hakka district. No town or village was passed on the way; three small inns at intervals of five miles, where travellers could get a cup of water or a bowl of congee, being the only habitations seen. At the first of these we stopped for breakfast, our principal dish being a quantity of very black native rice. The fine facilities for grazing seemed to be only partly utilised. Small herds of cattle, chiefly water buffaloes, were feeding on the shrub-grown uplands, the clack of the wooden bells showing their presence on either side. In almost every herd was seen a white or Albino buffalo, and sometimes three or four in one. Their red eyes, and their rough, red skin showing through the thin covering of whitish hair, gave them a strange appearance, only a few degrees less repulsive than their black, mud-besmeared fellows. Numerous cross paths, leading off from the main road, showed the entrance to many villages not visible as we passed; and broad well-graded roads, with men on horseback, and women on wheelbarrows, were good indications of prosperity. As the clouds lifted fine views of the surrounding country were obtained, varying infinitely with successive changes of position. To the right lay the dark line of the Black Ridge, thickly

covered with trees, and to the left the spurs of the higher gave a fine succession of views, each fresh turn disclosing some attractive hill or valley unseen before. Just before entering No-t'ai, we came upon a group of buffalo carts ranged on the greensward, laden with goods from the Le country. They were on their way from Nam-fung to Ka-lit, about fifty miles north-east, whence they would be shipped by boat to Hoi-how. This road from Nam-fung to Ka-lit, about sixty miles in length, is the chief ox-cart road on the island; and the business that passes over it every year in rattan, fragrant wood, and less valuable articles, is considerable.

We found No-tai in the midst of a busy market, the street thronged with people intent on the business of the hour. The number of people, the rapid interchange of commodities, and the whole appearance of the town, gave the impression that it was a prosperous place. Anxious to escape the crush, and rest a few minutes after our twenty miles' walk, we entered an inn which combined shop, storehouse for earthenware, restaurant, hotel, and family residence all in one. An impromptu escort of the people proved rather noisy and destructive, and received our sharp rebuke, instead of thanks, for their attention, until they were driven out by the hostess, who faced them rod in hand, and covered them with maledictions as she picked up the pieces of broken pottery. As soon as we could get disengaged of our travelling gear, I took a supply of books and drew a large part of the crowd into the street, where, under a shed in the midst of a pouring rain, the books were sold as fast as they could be handed out, until the principal temple, turned into a temporary

dispensary, attracted the people to witness or receive the benefit of the doctor's skill.

As soon as we had time to study our surroundings, we found that we were the guests of a representative citizen of the Hakka district, the fifth in direct line of descent from the first settler, and a man evidently held in high respect by his neighbours and friends. He could converse in several dialects, and responded to my Cantonese like a native of the provincial city. From him I gathered much information concerning the Hakkas, Old and New, and received from him a present of a geomantic map of his ancestor's tomb. His kind disposition was shown in his affection for two little grandchildren, who climbed over him from morning till night, making a playhouse of his bed, and taking all sorts of liberties with him. As a reward for good behaviour, we promised the children some biscuits. The little girl received hers as she deserved, but the boy, being very rude, was refused. Presently the old gentleman asked for some biscuits, as though he wished to know what we ate, but as soon as he received them, shared with the little grandson.

At No-t'ai not less than six or seven dialects are spoken—viz., Hakka, Cantonese, Hainanese, Lam-ko, Loi, Tam-chow, Mandarin, the native Le, and some more restricted local patois. Heavy rains, that swelled the small streams beyond the possibility of crossing, detained us two days, in which time we became quite familiar with the town, and were glad to see that opium was not so extensively used as in some of the other places visited.

From No-t'ai it is ten miles to Nam-fung, the principal trading post with the Les on this side of the island. The



PINE APPLES.

road passes for the most part through shrub-covered pasture-lands, over which small herds of cattle are grazing. Several fair-sized rice plains are passed with villages bordering them. Proclamations written on the freshly-cut white sides of wooden posts are set in conspicuous places, commanding people to keep watch over their cattle, and not to permit them to trespass on the fields of rice and sweet potatoes, which are mostly unenclosed by hedges or walls. Some fine groves of bananas, and several small plantations of pine-apples were seen. Three miles from Nam-fung we stopped to rest under a banyan of magnificent proportions. Its wide extending branches were supported by many of its own living pillars, formed by the root-like shoots that depend from the branches, and after taking root in the earth, have grown into subordinate trunks. The space covered by this grand and finely-proportioned tree was not less than an acre. The curved and knotted roots extending for yards around the main trunk afforded seats for travellers to rest upon. As we passed along, the eye never wearied of the hills and mountains that rose successively before us on either side, many of them heavily wooded, but rested most frequently on the conspicuous form of Sha-mo-ling, that appeared distinct and massive the nearer we approached.

Reaching Nam-fung at nightfall, the question of securing suitable lodgings became rather serious, as we passed from one to another of the dark, narrow, crowded places, with no separate rooms, that were showed to us. An empty house was offered to us, which had been vacated by a Cantonese merchant recently gone to Hoi-how, but being without furniture, fuel, or cooking utensils, damp,

dirty, with a leaky roof, and the backdoor missing, it being, moreover, late at night, and our attendants utterly ignorant of the town, we felt that the open plain outside would have been preferable under the circumstances. After many futile efforts to secure something better, we took shelter in the most uncomfortable and unhealthy quarters we encountered on the whole journey.

We were much disappointed in the appearance of Nam-fung. Instead of the busy and important mart we had expected, we found only a dull, lifeless town, with but one street, and that scarcely more than one-fourth of a mile in length. Market on alternate days brings a few hundreds of people from the country near, and a few tens of Les from the districts further inland. Opium smoking seems almost universal, and betel-nut chewing, of which we had seen more or less from Lam-ko onward, is very prevalent. The women especially, both Chinese and Les, seem addicted to it. Their lips and chins besmeared with the ugly red juice, their teeth and gums blackened by its prolonged use, disfigure what would otherwise be attractive countenances.

The chief and almost only trade is in goods from the Le country. This is almost entirely in the hands of Cantonese, four or five leading firms controlling the business. The Cantonese is the prevailing dialect of the place, although several others are also in use. The proportion of the trade with the Les was also a great surprise. All the goods purchased by all the firms in any one day would scarcely make a fair load for a buffalo cart, and it is only on the supposition of immense profits that the business can be carried on at all. The chief articles of

commerce are rattan, deer-horns and sinews, dried mushrooms, fragrant wood, hides, and minor articles. These are collected in driblets from the Les who come out to market, and by Chinese agents who go through the Le villages. When enough has accumulated to make cargo, for several buffalo carts, it is sent by these vehicles, sixty miles overland, to the landing-place of Kā-lit, at the head of navigation on the Teng-on River, and thence by boat to Hoi-how. Small quantities are sometimes sent to How-sui, and some also to Hai-tau. The unsophisticated Les are victimised in many ways, as to the weight and quality of the goods they bring, on the one hand, and in the payment they receive, either in money or goods exchanged, on the other.

The town is very unhealthy, the water bad, and the place itself uninviting. It is set amidst grass-grown hills, that contrast unfavourably with the picturesque and wooded heights in the distance. In the immediate vicinity are a number of small villages set along the bank of the little streams, the pathways leading to them lined with high, stiff grass. These little hamlets are mostly occupied by Hakka immigrants, who are gradually redeeming the soil about their homes from its native wildness. One of our walks led us to the house of a cartwright, whose grandfather had opened the little settlement where his descendants lived, and which had as yet only increased to three or four frail huts. The man was at work on one of the clumsy cart-wheels, which combine the three great disadvantages of unnecessary weight, waste of material, and difficulty of management. The wood chiefly used is that of the wild lichee, which is indigenous on the island,

and grows to a great size, some trees that we saw being three feet in diameter, and forty feet high. The fruit of these trees is useless, but the timber is very valuable, being reddish hued, heavy, close grained, and very durable. The country is but sparsely populated, and would support three or four times the present population. Besides cultivating the soil, many of the people are more or less concerned in dealing with the Les, as agents for the larger houses, or as independent traders in a small way.

Nam-fung is the last Chinese town on the borders of the Le country. Five miles in any direction, except north, the way we came, leads one into the midst of the Aborigines. The most conspicuous object near is the great hill we have been watching on our way hither. Four or five miles west it rises in a solid dome-like shape, more than 3,000 feet above the plain. The lower portions are bare of trees, but the middle and upper portions are well wooded. To the south it presents a great precipice of dark-coloured rock, over which water, sometimes in streams, and again trickling from crevices in the rock, pours down glistening in a broad sheet as the sun falls upon it. The hill is inhabited by Les, whose groups of straw-thatched huts cluster on the sides and tops, the open spaces among the trees showing the fields they cultivate. They till the soil quietly from year to year, and are reckoned among the "tame" or civilised Les. From an open space to the west of the town are seen, on clear days, the highest mountains in the interior, the Le Mother peaks. A little to the east, and the higher line of the Five Finger mountains almost directly south,

while many peaks of lower height, but fine proportions, flank them on either side. While Nam-fung is the chief mart, yet a small trade is done with the Les in several other places—as Ling-lun to the north, and Wong-ng and Mow-ti in the direction of Tam-chow, which is about forty miles west of Nam-fung. The presence of gold in some of the hills is well known, and in one place ten miles south-east of Nam-fung, mining was carried on to some extent a few years ago, but the owners of the land, and the people living near, fearing the earth would take revenge for the removal of her precious deposits, and bring some disaster upon them, forbade its continuance, and the operations were stopped. It is said that now, being in very reduced circumstances, these people are ready to grant permission to any one who will undertake the work of mining.

Within the borders of the Le country, and especially at Un-mun, twenty miles south of Nam-fung, rich deposits of gold have been found. A few years ago a man from Canton began mining in this place on a larger scale than had previously been done, but the natives, under the excuse that the *débris* of mining destroyed their grain fields and injured their water supply, refused to let him continue. The Les seem to be free from any superstition in regard to removing precious metals, but are very suspicious of the Chinese, as they have great reason to be.

In the Shek-luk hills in the Cheung-fa district, about twenty miles south-west, copper was formerly mined on quite an extensive scale, the ore being of a very rich quality. Owing to improper management the mine caved in, causing about one hundred men to lose their lives,

and since that occurrence the mine has not been reopened. If arrangements could be made directly with the Les, without Chinese intervention, these mines, both for silver and gold, copper, and perhaps other metals as well, could no doubt be successfully worked. In whatever transaction that occurs between the Chinese and the Les, the latter are almost sure to suffer; and as the result of such experience they are shy and suspicious, so that it would be difficult to persuade them to engage in any enterprise where Chinese were concerned.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ABORIGINES OF HAINAN.



HAVING reached the limits of the Chinese territory, we were anxious to explore the unknown valleys of the Les, where no white man's foot had ever trod, and into which but few Chinese had ventured to penetrate. Standing on the borders of this country, we saw the lofty ramparts of their mountain homes, and understood to some extent, the nature of the defence which the physical features of the land have provided, and which has enabled them to maintain their independence against all the aggressions of the Chinese for nearly two thousand years. Driven back from the lowlands that stretch along the coast and cover most of the northern half of the island, which they once possessed, in common with the mountain regions of the centre and south, they have ever found a safe retreat in their interior mountain-girt valleys, from which they could bid defiance to their oppressors, and whence, on occasion, they could issue forth to take swift and fearful revenge on their enemies.

Having laid our plans to penetrate, and, if possible, pass through the centre of the Le country to the opposite side of the island, we improved every opportunity to gain

reliable information respecting the people and the best route of travel. The meagreness and indefiniteness of the information was surprising when we considered how closely the people of Nam-fung were connected with the Les in trade and general intercourse. Meeting these strange people for the first time face to face at this place, I observed their appearance and actions with no little interest. On the first day after our arrival, about twenty of them came to market, of whom six were women. Having previously heard of only two classes, the "Shang," or "Wild Les," and the "Shuk," or "Tame Les," the latter of whom dressed much like the Chinese, and the former of whom discarded trousers and other evidences of civilisation, I sought to determine the status of those then seen. According to this method of distinction both classes were represented. They all had their hair twisted into a knot on the top of their heads, the position of the knot varying from a point just over the eyes to the crown of the head. Some added a second knot at the back of the head, and all had a more or less dishevelled appearance. One of the men carried a rifle, and all were provided with small baskets, long and narrow, in which the all-necessary wood knife, flint and tinder, and other small articles were carried. The women were all tattooed with blue stripes over their cheeks, foreheads, chins, hands, arms, legs, and partially on the breast and back. They wore short jackets, curved down the back, and bound with thick, strong thread, and short, closely-fitting skirts, that scarcely reached to their knees. In their ears were inserted bits of deer bone, a quarter of an inch in diameter. Their hair was drawn back from the forehead, and held

by a comb, the head being covered by a fringed kerchief. Physically they were strong and well developed, with pleasing faces and straight features.

On the second market day there were about fifty Les in attendance from various localities. Some of the younger women were quite handsome in spite of the blue lines tattooed over their faces. Different patterns in this peculiar tracing were noticed. In some the lines were numerous but very light; in others there was one light stroke beginning at the temple, and coming down over the cheeks to the chin; others again had heavy lines dotted in the centre. They seemed shy and diffident, wandering in groups of three and four, selecting articles that took their fancy. They seemed to be greatly attracted by embroidered purses and leather pouches, coloured thread and beads. These articles, of the poorest quality, were supplied to them at the highest prices. All the iron tools they use for farming, their knives, axes, etc., must be purchased from the Chinese, so that the small quantities of goods they bring out, exchanged for a few strings of cash, are replaced by articles of scarcely one-tenth their value. Most of those we saw at this place were from Pok-sha-tung, about fifteen miles south-west, and were fine specimens of men physically. In preparation for the narrative of personal experience among, and observation of them in their homes, the following account, taken from a Chinese work entitled "Fresh Notices of Kwang-tung," will be useful.

"The Le Mother mountains are lofty and precipitous. In their midst rise the Five-Finger and the Seven-Finger Peaks. Among them dwell the 'Wild Les' and the

beasts of the forests, while the 'Tame Les' encircle them around. The 'Tame Les' understand the language of the Chinese; they are accustomed to enter the cities for purposes of trade, and in the evening, at the blowing of a horn, gather in crowds to return to their homes. The 'Wild Les' are not accustomed to come to the cities, and are rarely seen.

"In the Yam-tsz Year (about 1600 A.D.) over twenty 'Wild Les' appeared unexpectedly with presents before the high officials. Their banner, inscribed with four words, '(the) Le people submit (to) Civilisation,' was fastened to a betel-nut pole. One man bore a large offering of flowers. They cast before the officers an article in shape like a cart-wheel, the outside of which was white, while on the inside flowers were traced in black. One man carried in his arms a *Yau-tsuk* tree seven or eight feet in length; two men brought in a porcine bear, and two carried a yellow deer. The countenances of these men were all black and forbidding, their hair was uncombed, their feet bare, and their short garments reached only to the waist, with a triangular piece of cloth to cover the lower body. Those who saw them called them demons. Over their foreheads the hair was twisted into a knot, in which gold and silver skewers, or hairpins of ox bone, were stuck.

"Those who insert the pins perpendicularly are 'Wild Les,' and those who insert them crosswise are 'Tame Les,' this being one way to distinguish them. The women generally wear the Le skirt, which is made of one whole piece of cloth, the upper and lower portions being firmly joined. From the neck to below the knees

it falls without a seam, but is sewed together along the four sides, and figures in the five colours are embroidered upon it with floss silk. This skirt is made with hundreds of fine pleats, and more than a hundred feet of cloth is used. Being long, it interferes with their walking, so they tuck it up in the middle, fold over fold on their backs, which gives them the appearance of carrying great burdens. They do their hair up in a knob, with a large hairpin inserted, to which is attached a great brass ring. Pendants hang from their ears to the shoulders. Their faces are stained with shapes of flowers, butterflies, and such things, from which they receive the name of "tattooed women;" the tattoo is not considered a mark of beauty.

"When a Le woman wishes to marry a man each has regard for the good looks or otherwise of the other, and the engagement is formed by mutual consent. The man first traces a pattern on the woman's face, which must be in exact conformity to the pattern pricked by his ancestors, not the slightest variation being allowed, the reason he gives being that he fears that after death his ancestors would not recognise her. Moreover, previous to the betrothal, the hands are tattooed, and on the evening before the marriage the face is done with patterns all given by the man, which are a sure sign by which she is recognised as his, and prevents her from marrying another. The old saying (in the Lai-ki) about the 'tattooed brow' referred to this practice, the terms used being convertible. It is done with a needle and a pencil, the ink stain producing a bluish hue in the form of flowers, insects, or fishes, in greater or less profusion. The general

judgment of the world is that tattooed faces are most becoming to the Le women, and also that the more profusely it is done the more highly they are esteemed. Only the daughters of free families are allowed to tattoo, and never in any instance is it permitted in the case of female slaves. The Le women all carry a piece of lacquer-wood, on which are written several lines of a Le ballad; the writing, however, is like the wriggling of worms, and cannot be deciphered.

"The bow never leaves the hands of the men. It is made of a rattan that grows in the shape of a perfect bow, the two ends having notches on which to fasten the strings. The strings are also of rattan and the barbed arrows of bamboo, without feathers, but armed with three barbs, in shape like the horns of the water caltrop, which, entering the flesh, cannot be withdrawn. When about to shoot the archers conceal themselves in the bamboo thicket, crouching low near its verge; as they fasten the arrow upon the bow, they stand perfectly still, taking deliberate aim at the object to be shot, and then suddenly let the arrow fly. In case the bones and tendons are shattered, they apply a medical plaster to the injured part, and thus with difficulty may avert death. The Wild Les are very fierce and violent; their bows draw two hundred catties (266 lb.); they go armed with spears, having corselets of bone and helmets made of the bark of some fragrant wood tree. The bows which the Tame Les use are made of various kinds of wood, and are in shape not unlike carrying poles. The strings are made from the fibres of the coir palm, and the arrows of the sinewy bamboo. They are not very accurate; they

are barbed with sharp iron furnished with a double hook, and have a small cord attached to them. When about to shoot the arrow is put in its place, and when any fierce, wild beast appears is instantly shot forth; the cord becomes entangled among the trees, so that the beast is easily captured.

“Whenever a man wishes to purchase Cham-liang (*Aquilaria agallochum*), the most precious of their fragrant woods, he sends for a Tame Le to act as guide to the Wild Les’ country. He prepares presents, money in the form of gilt and flowered paper, mattock heads a foot in length, and three hundred arrows, silk floss, thread, needles, cloth, and other things that please the Wild Les. At each chief village the visitor is entertained in the following manner. An ox being slain by an arrow shot through his body, the skin is taken as a saucepan, and the meat cooked in it is placed before the guests. Before each man is placed a bowl, which is poured full of spiced or pepper wine, in the presence of the guests. If they can drink it, they quaff it off at one draught, if not, they decline with the excuse that they are not worthy. If some partake and others do not they construe it as an indication of contempt or esteem, as the case may be; and although they supply the fragrant woods to those whom they suppose have slighted them, they are sure to waylay them in some narrow, dangerous place, and kill them, such is their fierceness and cruelty. The Tame Les also act as guides to the Wild Les in their depredations. When they go out to plunder they carry off men and women and everything in the houses. The speed with which they march is like flying, so that the

soldiers sent in pursuit are unable to overtake and capture them. The women, however, with their great long Le skirts, are much impeded in walking, and occasionally are caught, when they crouch down in fear.

"The Les, it is said, do not understand the art of divination. If they have a stroke of good or bad luck, their usual mode is to kill a fowl, and seek to learn, by examining its feet, whether sorrow or happiness is to succeed. In the sixth and twelfth month, midsummer and mid-winter, they have their chief feast, and celebrate their weddings by general entertainments. In the fine evenings of spring the young men and maidens of sixteen and seventeen meet to dance, and play, and sing, and also make love to each other. They make their own matches, the father and mother not interfering with their choice, but when all is settled between them, the parents arrange the marriage presents, and unite the lovers according to the rites of the Le people. When the time comes the parents order the bride to cover her head, arrange her dress, and go out to the bridegroom, who stands near the door, and as she comes near takes her on his back and carries her home.

"Their mode of dancing is said to be much like that of the Kepo-whans in Formosa. A broken circle is formed by a line of men and women, the men occupying one half and the women the other. The hands of each are crossed in front, the left hand being clasped in the right of the person on the right, and the right hand in the left of the one on the other side. The men lead the song and the women follow, and as they sing, the circle advances two steps, contracting toward the

centre, and then retires two steps, expanding again. A man stands in the middle with a bowl of wine, and supplies each of the merry-makers in turn, their mirth increasing in consequence until it gets to be boisterous. On moonlight nights the dance is kept up till morning.

"Their custom is not to cry when their parents die, but to swallow quantities of raw meat, which is their mode of expressing great grief. A log is hollowed out for a coffin, and at the time for burial some one leads the way, and throws an egg upon the ground. The place where the egg falls unbroken is considered the most favourable site for the grave. In some of the tribes, the Mias-les in particular, on the death of the father the son succeeds in control of the house, while among others the widow becomes master on the death of the husband. In some tribes they have great fear of evil spirits, and try to propitiate them, while members of other tribes seem entirely destitute of such fear. When sick they will sometimes sacrifice oxen to propitiate the evil spirits, and on the occasion of burial will sacrifice cattle, and invite their friends to a feast. They have no positions of honour in sitting down. They have maintained their independence against the Chinese except in a few isolated cases. The only instance which history records of the conversion of the Les on any important scale to Chinese beliefs and modes of life took place in 1174 A.D., when one of the chiefs of the Central Mountain region came over with 1,520 of his followers, both male and female, gave up their independent self-government, and placed themselves under Chinese jurisdiction. The chief men of

the party, to the number of eighty-two, were marched in procession, with the Governor of King-chow at the head, to the principal temple in the city, where they cut notches in a stone and dipped their fingers in blood in ratification of their engagement to abandon the practices of rapine and disorder. Drawings of their persons and costumes were then prepared and forwarded to the emperor.

"This treaty of peace and submission was not of long duration. Repeated collisions occurred between the Les and the Chinese. Hai-sui, the great native statesman of Hainan, memorialised the throne on the subject, and urged some efficient means of restraint. In his memorial he recounted no less than three uprisings of the Aborigines in the space of exactly half a century, which were suppressed only by enormous outlays and extraordinary amounts, in addition to the annual and costly expeditions, which were rendered necessary by continual minor outbreaks. The three campaigns referred to were undertaken in 1501, 1541, and 1550 A.D., on each of which occasions more than ten thousand troops were brought over from the mainland, and hundreds of thousands of money expended. Hai-sui's proposal to the Government was to cut two roads, that should cross each other in the centre of the Le country; one extending north and south and the other east and west. This would bring the whole country under immediate control, and render access to the heart of the wild country an easy matter. This simple plan, known in official records as the 'cross-roads proposal,' was never undertaken, and the interior has remained a wild unknown, which even the most venturesome

Chinese, spurred on by the hope of gain, have scarcely dared to penetrate.

“There are other tribes of the same race, known as the ‘Wild Kis,’ still more fierce and violent, so that even the ‘Wild Les’ stand in fear of them. Generally speaking, the Wild Les abound among the Great Five-Finger Mountains; and the Wild Kis in great numbers among the Little Five-Finger Mountains. The Kis are what were called T’ohs in the time of the Sui dynasty (581-618 A.D.); the Les in the Han dynasty (A.D. 25-190) were called Le, signifying rude, the character used being interchanged with *le*, meaning a measure of distance or a village. The books of Han speak of the ‘barbarous Les’ of Kau-chán, and again of the Le prince who submitted to the Han. It is the Les of Hainan who are supposed to be referred to in these notices. The ‘Tame Kis’ are somewhat better than the wild ones. Those whose dens are in the warmer districts are called Kon-keuk-ki, ‘Dog-feet Kis.’ They and the Tame Les have the same usages, while those of the half-wild and half-tame differ somewhat.

“The boundary line of the country occupied by the Les and the Kis is reckoned at something over twelve hundred li (400 miles), or, reducing it to compact shape, about 400 li square. The mountains surround them like the shell of a univalve. All the various tribes of the Les live in the outer section, while the Kis dwell inside. These districts are from twenty to thirty li (three li to one mile) in extent, and each village has upwards of ten villages. The soil is rich, and the people numerous, as in the villages of the Chinese outside. The mountains and

peaks rise in ranges above each other, and are covered with deep forests. The water is noxious, and the mountains covered with a purple mist. The air is damp and close, being shut in on all sides, so that outsiders cannot enter constantly with impunity. In this way, by means of what is, in fact, a calamity, all savages obtain their security. There are proper means, however, of securing peaceful relations and preventing outbreaks—namely, by diffusing learning among them, and promoting friendliness between them and the people (the Chinese). In this way trouble may be prevented, and not of necessity by the use of soldiers.

“The Les are of two kinds; those living along the front of the Five-Finger Mountains are the Tame Les, and those to the back of these mountains are the Wild Les. The Tame Les are further divided into two kinds. Those living in contact with the Wild Les are called *Sam-ch'ai*, or, ‘Three Bailiff’ Les, and those living in contact with the Chinese are called the *Sz-chai*, or ‘Four Bailiff’ Les, the revenue derived from them being somewhat more than that from the other. The Tame Les are the parasites (literally dandel) of the Wild Les; and the tax-collector is the devourer (literally paddyworm) of the Tame Les. Wherever a Wild Les wriggles the Tame Les are up and after him. The wickedness and deceit of the Tame Les are provoked by the demands of the tax-collector. The tax-collector corresponds to the village elder or the headman of a street, and exacts service from the Les as though they were captives whose lives he had spared. The Les accord him the title of magistrate, and when the tax-collector appears before the officials he also calls

the Les his subjects. All taxes are levied according to his assessment, and find their way into his private purse. When his superiors demand them he says, 'Ah! these Wild Les, I don't dare to press them lest they rebel.' This is a specimen of their villainy and deceit.

"In case an official goes in person to the Le villages to receive tribute, if, as he arrives at each place, he partakes cordially of the repast prepared for him, the Les are delighted, treat him with great respect, and hasten to bring in all the dues. If in any way he fails to respond to their hospitality they become excessively enraged, and lie in wait along the forest paths with their bows and arrows to attack him; in this their evil nature corresponds to that of their water and plants.

"They go to the cities naked, with their hair knotted over their foreheads, having the figure of a cock, with a bone skewer fastened crosswise in his tail, on their heads, which serves with them in place of a crown. The official must appear pleased, smile graciously, and converse with them, receive their offerings, and in return present them with some silver medals and red cloth. With these they go home most happy, place them upon the incense altar, and regard them as precious. If, however, the official despises them because they are naked, and requires them to put on proper clothing before he will see them, the news of such treatment is soon spread abroad, and they are thenceforth seldom seen. The tribute is also withheld, and there is nothing for the officer to do but to ask the tax-collector to see to it.

"The Les are mostly of the two surnames *Fu* and *Wong*. If a chief has not one of these names the Les will not

submit to him. When a man wishes to become a chief an ox is tied to a certain place to be shot with the bow. If the arrow goes clean through the belly of the ox, and comes out on the other side, his right to become a Le chief is vindicated. In making agreements written characters are not used. When anything is borrowed they take a cord and make a knot in it, which serves as a deed or pledge. If the debt is not paid, although decades and centuries may have passed, the children or grandchildren may bring out the knotted cord and demand payment, nor can the descendants of the debtor deny the claim. If able to pay the debt they must do so, if not, they must work it out by service. In the sale of hill lands and fields the same rule is followed.

“If a Le dies and leaves no children, his fellow-villagers unite to support his wife. If she wishes to marry again she presents her request to the chief, rolls up her clothes and personal effects into a bundle, and choosing the man she wishes for a spouse, drops it at his feet. If the man consents he takes up the bundle, and the woman leads him home to her house, where pigs and other animals are slain in celebration of the wedding. When the parents die the children gather together what wealth or personal effects they have left, and, in the presence of the chief and the people, bury them, saying, ‘The favour bestowed by our parents is so great that we have nothing wherewith to requite them, and cannot therefore presume to appropriate what they have left behind to our own use.’ Moreover, of the people about none would dare to steal them, lest the evil spirits should injure them, so it is said.

"When carrying burdens, in every case they use but one shoulder, no matter if the way is over steep hills or dangerous places, saying their ancestors always did so, and they will not presume to change the mode. This is an instance of their stupid affectation of filial piety. The Les are much given to cursing, and their spirits have power to work great injury. For instance, if a man cut with his associate he straightway curses his deceased parents; in a little while the man's body begins to seem like fire, his head and stomach being racked with pain. He, aware of the cause, does not let it be known, but simply says, "I have offended the earth-god," and offers worship, pouring out a libation of wine, and presenting an offering of meat. These he sacrifices to the earth, repeating prayers the while. When the sacrifice is ended, the man and his wife divide the things between them and eat them, whereupon the sick man recovers immediately. If any one in trading cheats them with spurious or adulterated articles, they lie in wait along the road, and, seizing the first man that comes along, carry him to their home, where he is beaten with excessive severity. The victim of this treatment sends a letter to the real offender, informing him of the matter, insisting upon his sending the goods originally required, so that he may be released. If they cannot get hold of the man, he informs his associates, who apply to the magistrate for Tame Les to be sent with a warrant to arrest him. Although he does not understand writing he will recognise the official stamp, and deliver up the goods forthwith.

"Among their practices revenge holds a prominent

place, and is regarded as the first obligation. They do not, however, accomplish their revenge by artifice or secretly. Before the time arrives an ox is slain in the presence of the people, three bamboo arrows are taken and cut in two, after which an oath is taken and sacrifice offered. Messengers are sent with these arrows to challenge the enemy with some such message as, 'On such a day, at such an hour, the affair between us is to be settled; the knife is being sharpened and the spear point whetted in preparation for you.' The enemy then takes counsel with his fellow-villagers; he also slays an ox, and takes an oath before his people. The time is agreed upon, and the parties come forth to the contest; from either side the arrows are discharged, and one of the villagers is sure to be killed before it is ended. If one of them is in the wrong, his wife walks across the field of contest, crying out, 'It is my husband's grandsire who has injured you; do not destroy my husband, but rather destroy me instead.' The wife of the one who is in the right then calls to her husband, saying, 'His wife is so good and noble the quarrel may be dropped,' and the matter is then settled, as if a full recompense had been given. If a man is not able to accept the challenge, then he and his fellow-villagers take refuge in flight. When the avenger comes and finds no one to contend with him, he burns down the grass huts, saying, 'They are afraid of me; in this way I wipe out the disgrace of my forefathers.' Having secured this triumph he returns, and makes no further demand for satisfaction."

From the same work we take the following paragraph in regard to the Le Mother, the great ancestress of the Les.

“To the west of the city of King-chow-fu there formerly stood the Le Mother Temple. Tradition relates that the Spirit of Thunder carried an egg into the mountain, from which a woman was produced, and further, that a man from Kau-chi (Annam) crossed the sea in search of fragrant herbs, and that upon the marriage of these two, children and grandchildren followed in great numbers. This was the Le Mother, who is also called their patron saint (?), the first female ancestor of the Le people, so it is said. Originally the Les belonged to the race of birds and beasts; being derived from an egg, their natural disposition was distinct from that of human beings, so that from ancient times to the present they have remained uninfluenced by the royal civilisation.”

CHAPTER XXI.

INTO UNKNOWN REGIONS.



AT Nam-fung we met many men who had been short distances into the Le country. Our hostess at the inn was a Le woman, who had come out from the hills half-a-day's journey distant. She was very clever, spoke Hainanese perfectly, knew a little Cantonese, and had a smattering of several other dialects. It seems to be a not infrequent thing for the Chinesé, especially if they are poor, to secure Le wives for their sons. The accounts of the habits and customs, as well as the disposition of the people, which we gleaned by personal conversation, varied with each man's individual experience or hearsay account of them. Some dwelt upon the craftiness and hostility to all outsiders, their marvellous proficiency in using the bow, their knowledge and sinister use of subtle poisons, and their quickness to take offence, until some of the Chinese members of our party, who had shown great reluctance from the time we proposed to enter the Le country, were anxious to give up the enterprise.

We had among our attendants a deaf and dumb coolie, who at this point roused all his native ingenuity to

express his disapprobation of our plan, indicating by signs in a most comical manner their tattooed faces and short garments, the steep hills and heavy grass that obstructed the narrow path, the leeches, and the deep streams to be crossed; and drawing out an imaginary bow to show their hostility, he would shake his head in most emphatic dissent. He sought in vain for a pistol to protect himself, but found a large knife. Several others of our party also procured knives, but, fortunately, had no farther use for them than to cut away obstructing shrubs and branches from our paths.

Our most reliable informant was the head of the shop Kin-cheung. From him we obtained some useful hints as to the best means of travelling, the mode of ingratiating ourselves with the people, and certain things in which we should avoid offence. In the larger villages the headman is recognised by the Chinese officials under the title of Tsung-Kun; at one place, however, the chief is called Pa-tiu. In every case we were instantly to go to the house of the headman, which rule we were careful to follow. They do not use much silver money, and copper cash were so heavy. We inquired what substitutes could be taken, and were told that the most acceptable thing would be opium. A ball of opium, they said, judiciously bestowed, would enable us to travel with comfort through the whole country. They are exceedingly fond of the drug, and will make large returns in the way of provisions and labour, either as cookies or guides, for a very small quantity. We said, however, that we could not take opium, no matter how acceptable it might be. This surprised our Chinese

friends. "What!" they said, "when it is so easy to carry, and will please the Les more than anything else; will you not gratify them?" It was only after much explanation that our moral objections were understood. Opium being out of the question, we were recommended to take salt, tobacco-leaf, and salt-fish; and of these articles we provided ourselves with a moderate supply. It was necessary to engage additional coolies, as the difficulties of travel made it impossible for a man to carry more than half an ordinary load, forty catties being the utmost one man would engage to take.

We had been favoured with good weather most of the time up to this point, but at Nam-fung several days of incessant rain not only delayed us, but rendered travelling most uncomfortable. Chafing under the restraint of our dark and narrow lodgings, we made several attempts to start for the Le hills, but found the streams so swollen that no one could cross them, and going to the top of some of the nearer hills saw the country flooded in all directions. During this delay we received many kind attentions from our Chinese neighbours, one man offering us the use of his horse to ride over the country, others proposing to take us to the great hill Sha-mo-ling. We were also visited by numbers of Les from the inner districts, who, like ourselves, were detained by the flood; most of these wore Chinese clothes, but not queues. They brought doleful accounts of the high water, but assured us, that in the end we would have no difficulty in crossing the hills, and some of them even offered to act as guides to Ting-shui. We had frequently been told that to cross the island either from

north to south or from east to west, directly through the centre, was a feat which even the Chinese had never accomplished.

Although many men at Nam-fung professed to be familiar with the country, and to have lived with the Les for weeks and months at a time, yet close inquiry revealed the fact that their farthest journeys had only been to the nearer tribes, and none could give us accurate directions for more than two or three days. Our purpose to cross the mountains by as direct a line as possible to Ling-shui caused great surprise. Some advised us to keep to the east and north of the hills by way of Ling-mun, and reach Ling-shui by the usual route through Mán-chow; others counselled us to strike for Sam-a by way of Pok-sha-tung, to the south of the Five-Finger Range; but when we announced our determination, if possible, to go straight across, passing along the foot of the great Five-Finger Range, they could do no more than direct us for the first three or four days, telling us that after that we must inquire of the Les from place to place. No one doubted the possibility of making the journey we proposed, but many dwelt at length on the danger from robbers, the uncertainty of a friendly reception from the Les along the way, the discomforts of travel, the blood-thirsty leeches that would attack us on all sides, the scarcity of food, the Les themselves being sometimes reduced to eating the leaves of trees.

Making due allowance for exaggeration, we were not discouraged, but only impatient of the delay which the storms made unavoidable, and eager to see these interest-

ing, and, as we believed, much-wronged people in their homes. At last, after a week's detention, the weather having partially cleared, we took up our march in the morning, hoping to reach the first Le Village by night. Our course lay almost directly south, and all went well for a mile or more, until we reached a small brook with steep banks on either side, made of hard, slippery clay, that threatened unpleasant consequences at every step. Three miles brought us to a river of considerable size, over which we had to be ferried. The water was deep and swift, the *débris* on the shores showing at what a height it had flowed but two days before. The ferry boats were the rudest kind of dug-outs, made from the solid trunks of large trees, called *Heung-lo-muk*, probably of the camphor family. They were simply hollowed out and curved a little at the end, and seemed very clumsy crafts to venture in. The usual fare is said to be twenty cash for each passenger; of this we were not informed at the time, and the boatmen accepted much less without demur.

Ascending the opposite bank, we passed some teak trees in bloom, the clusters of pink flowers combining well with the large ornamental leaves, and after some slippery climbing reached the level road again. The river, in its winding course, approached our path on the right, some distance above where we had crossed, and soon after appeared on our left far below the crossing and winding on its downward course between attractive lines of hills, some wooded cliffs overhanging its banks as it disappeared to the south-east. The fragmentary section we had seen indicated a succession of charming and picturesque scenes along its course, until it issued

from the hills in the district of Ting-on. We passed several small hamlets, which looked forlorn and lonely in the wide grass-grown wastes that surrounded them. In the small fields beside the houses great ant-nests, cut from the bamboos, were set up as scarecrows. Scarcely had we traversed two miles of easy road, when a wretched gulch, filled with the vilest mud, had to be crossed. As we passed through it, and the little stream of clear water in the centre of it, the deposit of sand and mud on the high grass and branches far above our heads, gave us a vivid picture of what we should have encountered two days previous. The hills over which we passed were grass-grown and treeless, but on all sides appeared the greatest variety of hill and mountain landscape. Many of the hills in sight were thickly covered with trees, others with fine groves crowning their summits, and their sides bare, while others showed great black spaces from which the grass had been burned, the whole being very attractive. In the ravines below small streams gurgled along, hidden by the heavy masses of vines that twined and intertwined in impenetrable screens over the yielding bamboos, making ascent along the water-courses a sheer impossibility.

After five miles' travel, we came to a creek flowing down a deep ravine, which we had to cross three times in a few hundred yards. The water was transparently clear and sweet. On the farther side stood a small shed, under which two men coming from the opposite direction were resting, and picking off the leeches that had fastened to their feet. They told us it was impossible to reach the village of Ta-man-teen, at which we aimed, as a stream of

running water eight feet deep had to be crossed without bridge or boat. This was discouraging, but being directed to another place, of which we had not previously heard, we determined to push on, considering anything preferable to turning back to Nam-fung again.

From this little shed the road led directly up a steep hill, bordered on either side, and overhung, to a great extent, by high grass, heavy with moisture from the rain that now fell incessantly. The hard, well-worn path was like ice in smoothness, which made it difficult for us with our stout walking-sticks to keep from falling. The coolies, with their burdens, were hard put to, each one stumbling several times, and in some instances greeting their mother-earth with such suddenness and force as to dislodge basket lids, and strew the ground with medicine bottles and surgical instruments. Leaving them to struggle with the difficulties of the steep ascent, we were soon far ahead, and by a fortunate mistake passed, without noticing it, the turning-point in the path that would have led us to the Le village, and following the wider path, from which the grass had been burned on either side, came suddenly upon a small settlement of whose existence we had not been informed. The day was more than half gone, we were thoroughly wet and tired, as well as chilled by the dampness; we were still six miles from the town, and darkness would have fallen upon us in the dreariest, dampest, and most shelterless spot, so we called a halt at the hamlet of Chi-wan, and concluded to remain for the night. It was fortunate we did so, for the rain came on again, and made it impossible for us to move for three days more.

We were made comparatively comfortable in a new bamboo house, which the owner placed entirely at our disposal, he and his wife retreating to some wretched huts a few yards away, where several other families were housed. The house was charmingly situated in a little dell with fine hills on all sides, a stream of water flowing near. During our stay the clouds did not lift sufficiently for us to see the tops of the hills around, which seemed to be covered over with rank jungle grass, with small groves of trees scattered over their sides. A small hut of straw, which afforded temporary shelter to the men when cutting wood or tilling the distant fields, was seen at intervals through the mist. The jungle grass, when cut in the proper season, makes excellent thatch for roofs. The great difficulty in breaking up this wild jungle soil appeared in the little fields that surrounded the village. After burning off the surface covering of grass and shrubs, there remains a layer of matted roots a foot thick, which must be grubbed up by main force before the soil can be utilised. If it is neglected for a few years the jungle repossesses it, and the same process must be gone over before it can be reclaimed. As we entered the enclosure of the little hamlet, a half-blind Le from a neighbouring village was with great effort removing these grass roots from a small plot of ground, receiving five cents a day for his work.

Our host, who was a Hakka, showed himself very obliging in his treatment of us, and furnished us with information for our journey as far as his knowledge extended. He had lived and traded more or less with the Les for eighteen years, but had never gone more

than two or three days' journey into their country. The little settlement, of which he seemed to be the chief man, was a motley gathering of Hakkas, Hainanese, Les, and Miaos, there being at least one of the latter, a woman with stout frame, a broad, placid face, and enormous silver earrings. The time hung heavily on our hands, and the dampness increasing, added chilliness to one other discomfort, so that we resorted to chopping firewood as a means of keeping warm.

After three days, although the mist still hung heavy over the hills, we started for the Le village, which we reached after a most trying journey of six hours, having travelled not more than six miles in that time, soaked with water from the clouds and creeks, and completely tired out. We first retraced our steps to the turning-point we had missed in coming, and thence went down a grassy hill to a creek, which we reached after passing a reeking swamp, and crossed on the trunk of a tree. Ascending another hill, with tall wet grass overhanging the slippery path, we came to the descent into a deep valley. In the ravines were clumps of bamboo, covered with thick canopies of vines, and on the hillsides were quantities of broad-leafed plants, among which the *Alpinia nutans* was most plentiful, and also the *A. galanga*. Wild bananas grew in profusion in many of the ravines, many trees of the cat's-tail variety (*Spadothea-cauda-felina*) were seen with gorgeous flowers strewn the ground, or hanging thickly on the trees. Traces of wild pigs appeared where the soil had been uprooted to obtain the bulbous roots of the heavy grass. After two miles our path merged into the brook descending the valley, and

thenceforth for two hours we had to walk on the bed of the creek, with the water knee deep, and the bottom covered with sharp or slippery stones. Overhead the vines and branches greatly interfered with our progress, entangling the carrying-poles, and giving our bearers no little trouble.

After two miles of such travelling our watery way led to a stream about fifty yards wide, which we had to ford four times in the next mile. The water was swift and the bottom stony; the banks were lined with luxuriant vegetation, pathless jungles, in fact, while groves of trees in many places gave a wild and forest-like aspect to the scene. At the second crossing a rude bridge of bamboo poles had been constructed from branch to branch of the over-hanging trees, and on this we crossed, preferring to treat ourselves to its swaying joints rather than wade waist deep through the rapid water below. One of our coolies preferred the lower route, and, as a consequence, his baskets were struck by the whirling water, and to our dismay, we saw our last supply of beef-steak and fruit disappear rapidly down the stream, never to be recovered. A short distance beyond this we crossed a field, the first signs of cultivation we had seen. It was only a few acres in extent, enclosed by rough stakes, with the stumps of large trees thickly scattered over it, and the long stubble of the rice recently cut. On the hill above several wild-looking *Les* appeared, but kept at a safe distance from us. After the repeated crossing of the stream we began the ascent of a thickly-wooded hill, with a narrow, precarious path winding up the steep side. The ascent of this hill

proved a most toilsome task to our bearers, annoyed as they were by the leeches that infested the way.

These leeches, which were our inseparable companions during our sojourn in the Le country, seem to be peculiar to this part of the island. They are called by the natives "hill leeches," to distinguish them from their kindred in the waters. They are of a greyish-brown or earthen hue, and vary from half an inch to one and a half inches in length, and swarm from the ground on all sides. Along the path, on the ends of grass blades and branches of shrubs, they may be seen holding by one end while they reach out their whole length, feeling on every side for prey. The instant they touch the foot or hand, or any part of the body, they take fast hold, and can only be detached by the application of fire, or when they are sated with blood. It is impossible to escape them, the only question being how to mitigate their ravages. The Les carry sharp bamboo sticks, with which, by a quick motion, they sometimes can detach them. The feet and legs of our coolies were constantly streaming with blood from leech bites; and often have we been startled to find them calmly sucking the blood in some unexpected part of the body, which they reached through a rent in our clothes. All means of subduing them failed, and it became a regular habit on arrival at any place to first sit down and pick off the leeches, which we were careful to destroy with hot coals, to prevent them from injuring others. We longed for the power of learning, attributed to the young lady in Boston, who in walking through the park saw an ugly worm crawl over the path; she called it by its scientific name, which

so overcame the poor creature that it rolled over on its side and died. Unfortunately the scientific name of these Hainan leeches was unknown to us, and all ordinary epithets failed to restrain them in their thirst for blood.

Having reached some open spaces of grassy pasture land, the presence of cattle indicated their proximity to the village. While waiting for our party to assemble we examined the flora about us. Some splendid vines threw a profusion of white and pink flowers over the bamboos, filling the air with fragrance. Native tea, growing wild among the other shrubs, attracted our notice, covered as the shrubs were with white flowers. The presence of this tea in the wild jungle would certainly indicate that it was indigenous. The natives pluck and dry the leaves, and supply the market with limited quantities of what is called Le tea. The village, hidden by a dense border of trees, was not seen until we were within a few yards of the gate.

CHAPTER XXII.

OUR RECEPTION BY THE LFS.



THE village of Ta-mán-teen is twelve miles from Nam-fung, and stands within the borders of the Le country, several miles beyond Chinese jurisdiction. There was no mark to tell us when we passed the boundary line, but the first glance at our surroundings, as we entered the town, told us we were among a people of different habits and modes of life. The town is so concealed by encircling woodlands, that nothing of it is seen until we stand before the wicket-gate that marks the entrance. Finding the gate closed, we followed the advice given to us in Nam-fung, to wait until some one inside should invite us to enter, before attempting to do so. As no one was near, we called aloud to attract attention; when several men quickly appeared and beckoned us to enter. We inquired for the headman of the village, and were immediately escorted to his house. He was absent at the time, but we were told to go in without hesitation, and make ourselves at home. His sister assumed the position of hostess, and brought water, firewood, and other necessities with great readiness.

We were surprised at the spaciousness, airiness, and

comparative comfort of the house, which was in great contrast to the low, dark, damp places, with beds on the bare earth, which we had been led to expect. It was of the kind called by the people "boat houses," from their resemblance in shape to the upturned hull of a boat, a very apt designation. The construction is very simple,—two rows of hard wood pillars firmly imbedded in the earth, and joined by crossbeams from the main



A LES VILLAGE.

support. On these beams are laid the strong and supple trunks of young trees, which interlace in a curved line at the top, and on them bamboos are placed crosswise, making a light and solid frame, and the whole is covered over with an impervious thatch of jungle grass. The side walls are made of woven bamboo, three or four feet high, and beyond these, the straw thatch slopes several feet, until it almost touches the ground, forming broad

and well-protected eaves. Under these generous eaves the dogs, the goats, and other animals find a comfortable shelter. The end walls are made of bamboo, latticed with a door in the middle of each, that stands open all day long. No windows are needed, as the openings in the bamboo work admit sufficient light, even when the doors are shut. Within, the space is sometimes divided into apartments by light bamboo partitions. In this house, however, but one small room in the corner was so divided off. The floor was of earth, but beaten smooth and solid. Along one side were beds arranged on bamboo frames, raised a foot or more from the ground. The house, being built on a slope, the main entrance was from the back or the end against the hill, the roof extending over an open space outside the door about ten feet square. At the other end the roof projected in a straight line eight or ten feet, covering a kind of rude portico, from which a fine view of the village possessions and the charming country surrounding was opened before us. The prospect from this portico was most attractive. A broad plain extended for miles bordered with picturesque ridges, and dotted with many wooded hills, small fields of rice and potatoes appeared, but the greater part was one splendid range of pasture land, over which the herds of cows and goats roamed through the day, returning to their shelter under the eaves of the houses at night.

Ta-mán-teen contains twenty houses, all built on the same pattern, with a population of about one hundred. It is built on the gentle slope of a low hill, the natural declivity affording the means of easy drainage. The

people belong to the tribe of the Hak-shim Les, and are under the jurisdiction of the chief, who resides in Fan-lun, the next town inland. The Chinese wrote the name of the tribe with the characters which mean "black lightning;" but whether this expression conveys the native meaning of the word or not I am unable to say. The women are tattooed with several lines down the cheeks and across the chin. They wear long, heavy skirts, reaching to the ankles, and short Zouave jackets, with a single fastening at the neck. They are shy, but stout and contented-looking. They carry their infants in a peculiar way astride their hips, after the manner of the Siamese. The men shave their heads like the Chinese, but do not wear the queue. We looked keenly about for any signs of the worship of idols or of spirits, but no images or shrines of any kind were seen in the village, only a few slips of gilt-bespattered paper over the doors and beams, which may have been simply for ornament, or in imitation of the Chinese, without any special significance. We had been told that the corner behind the door was sacred to the Le-poh-seen, a kind of fairy grandmother, and that we should be careful not to place any of our baggage there, or to peer too curiously into it. The corners in this house, however, seemed to be put to the usual uses for stowing hoes, poles, hats, etc., to the utter disregard of fairy grand-dames, or other supernatural beings.

Late in the evening our host returned, and gave us a most cordial welcome. He was intelligent, of good physique and manly bearing, and was dressed in Chinese clothes, which, we were told, he assumed more as a

matter of convenience than as any indication of subjection to imperial authority. He set himself at once to do all he could for our comfort. Previous to his return we had inquired if, for the sake of privacy, we could have the small room in the corner, and his sister had very properly deferred an answer until her brother's arrival, taking the additional precaution of locking the door. When he came back we heard what seemed to be a serious altercation between the two at the door of this room, carried on in a language which struck us at once as radically different from the Chinese. We soon learned that the trouble was about the room which he wished to give us the use of, but the key of the lock was lost, and he was blaming his sister for her excess of caution in locking it. We hastened to assure him that a bed in the main room would suit us quite as well.

We were provided with canvas beds, with wooden stools to support them, and needed only bamboos on which to stretch the canvas to secure most comfortable sleeping accommodation. All through the Chinese territory, however, we found great difficulty in procuring the necessary bamboo sticks. In some places none were to be had, while in others we were supplied with old and decayed ones, that would give way in the middle of the night, and let us down suddenly on the damp floor in the darkness, amidst rats and other vermin. Our experience on such occasions, while amusing to a degree, was not very cheering, and often led us to accept the doubtful hospitality of a bed already arranged, rather than take the trouble of searching for strong and suitable bamboos on which to stretch our bamboo cots. But in

this first Le village our wants were scarcely mentioned before our host went off in the darkness with a torch and hatchet to the grove behind the town, and soon returned with some fine bamboos, on which we stretched our beds, and laid down in perfect comfort.

The arrival of such a caravan as ours (we numbered fourteen) produced a great sensation in the town, and brought nearly the whole population to see us. They filled the house until a late hour in the evening, but the contrast between them and an ordinary Chinese crowd was most evident. They kept at a respectful distance, unless encouraged to come near, and in their curiosity showed not the slightest rudeness. Our beds, our clothing, and everything were looked at with the greatest interest, but nothing was touched without permission. It was a pleasure to gratify their curiosity. Our watches and alarm clock greatly astonished them. The texture of our sleeping rugs, and the gay colours of one of them, especially attracted them. They seemed possessed of an innate gentleness and politeness towards strangers that divested all their actions of rudeness.

They live in great simplicity, and seem to have but few wants, and these such as are easily satisfied. The meagreness of their usual diet was evident from the eagerness with which small presents of salt* fish were accepted, each recipient broiling his portion without delay on the hot embers, and eating it with great relish. A large fire was kept up, which proved most agreeable to us, chilled as we were by the dampness of the early November rains. The abundance of firewood was a great boon, as it enabled us to have our clothing dried without

delay, but the paucity of cooking utensils made the preparation of food a rather slow process. The Les have usually but one large iron kettle, in which everything is cooked, and which, when the cooking is done, is used to boil water for various purposes, and also does duty as wash-bowl, foot-bath, etc. The people keep but a small supply of rice in hand, and our host's rice jar was soon emptied in meeting the wants of our company. As a consequence, our slumbers were disturbed through the night by the monotonous drumming of the wooden pestle as a fresh supply was being hulled to provide breakfast for our bearers. Fowls seemed plentiful about the houses, but they would part with neither them nor their eggs, the latter being kept, as they said, for hatching, and the fowls for the use of the sick and the aged.

On the walls of the house were hung heavy nets for the capture of game, the mode of capture being to enclose a space, perhaps of swampy ground, with the net, which is about four feet broad and several hundred feet long, and drive the game into it. Wild pigs, deer, and other smaller game are thus caught. Bows and arrows, spears and knives also adorned the beams, while numerous trophies of the chase, in the shape of the jawbones of the animals captured, were hung in conspicuous places along the rafters. We were informed that it being harvest season no one had leisure to go in search of game. Most of the people were busy gathering in the rice, which is the chief crop. Sweet potatoes are also cultivated in small patches, while papayas and squashes grow profusely about the village. As we prepared to continue our journey, signs of mutiny were evident among our bearers :

those from Nam-fung, who were to act as guides, declared that they knew the way no further, and all complained of the excessive difficulty of travelling. We tried to get substitutes among the Les, but they all declined, with the excuse that they could not spare the time from their harvest, which we found to be only a ruse to cover up their dislike to act as bearers, especially in company with Chinese. These troubles were increased by an impudent and talkative Chinaman, who reached the village late in the previous evening, and whose account of the state of the roads and general discomforts to be met, fed the flame of discontent already kindled. After a delay of several hours they yielded under a promise from us to secure additional bearers in the next town if possible. We left Ta-man-teen grateful for the hospitality received, and with minds relieved of any apprehension as to the reception we should receive as we advanced inland. As we set forth from the village, the first question that came to us was—What direction shall we take? Which of the many paths leading from the village is the one for us to follow? Our minds were soon set at rest by an escort of Les, sent without solicitation by our host to show us the way. He accompanied us until we were sufficiently well started to be in little danger of going astray, and when they turned back, left us under the guidance of a bright and active young Le from another village, who was carrying salt for the Chinaman referred to above, so that there might be no possibility of our mistaking the road. The absolute need of a guide was seen at every stage of our journey, the path being not only indistinct at times, but crossed

by many bye-paths, which intersected it at all angles, making it utterly impossible for a stranger to distinguish the right from the wrong, while a mistake would have led one off into the wild jungle perhaps miles from any village.

Our way lay toward the south-east, the greater part of it on this day through a valley, where the travelling was comparatively easy. The chief discomforts were the long, sharp-edged grass that overhung the path, the mud, in some places deep and filthy, the leeches abounding on all sides, and the streams to be forded, of which no less than twenty were crossed during the day in a distance of seven miles. For the first mile we passed through fields that had once been cultivated, but were now overgrown with shrubs and small trees, among which the tea-plant, growing wild, was conspicuous. At the end of this stage we came upon the remains of a Le encampment, where the embers of a fire were still smouldering, and the broken frame of a grass-covered shed showed where the people had slept. They were probably a party from the inner hills on their way to the Chinese market with goods. The fire kindled and kept constantly burning was not merely for cooking and warmth, but specially as the best and only sure protection against leeches.

Two miles' further travel, in which several streams were forded and much sandy soil traversed, brought us to another interesting spot—a large, flat rock of sandstone stretching out into the stream, several feet above the ordinary level of the water. It is one of the chief landmarks along this road, and furnishes sleeping accommodation for small bands of Les on their way to market or

from village to village. As the narrow path was much obstructed by small trees blown across it in the recent storms, I took the large knife purchased for defence at Nam-fung, and helped to clear the way. While thus equipped, and separated from the rest of the party, I met a Le and his wife coming in the opposite direction. The woman, who was most profusely tattooed, had a very pleasing face, and the man had a quiet, gentle look. The sight of the knife startled them, and caused them to turn aside and quickly disappear down the bed of the stream, leaving me to regret the hostile appearance I must have presented.

On the steep hillside above this valley we saw the huts of a people called by some the Shán-miaos, and by others the Miao-les, a mountain tribe that keeps aloof from the dwellers of the plain. As the names indicate, they are probably the direct descendants of the original Miaos, brought from the mountain regions of the mainland, or of the Miaos and Les united, who have become a distinct tribe, and now maintain an independent position among the numerous other Le tribes. Accounts of their disposition and habits vary greatly. Some describe them as cruel and vindictive, and credit them with the secret of preparing subtle poisons, which, stealthily administered in food, will carry off their victims quietly, but without fail. Others, again, say they are peaceable, honest, and industrious, toiling patiently on their high land, and causing little trouble to any one. All, however, agree that they are very shy and exclusive, living in an isolated way, with usually only two or three huts in a place among the hills, and rarely mingling with the other people.

As we passed through this valley, we were struck with the evident fertility of the soil, and wondered much that the people should neglect it for the steep hillsides, where we saw fields of grain on slopes where it would be difficult for a man to ascend. The valley, no doubt, is subject to frequent overflows, but a little united effort would restrain the stream within proper bounds, and leave the people in possession of the rich, accessible, and easily-cultivated plain. As may be imagined, the vegetation along this valley was most profuse and varied. Cat-tails in great abundance, covered with flowers like large yellow, purple-centred cups, ferns of great variety and grace, and, not the least attractive, vining bamboos, climbing over the larger trees, and stretching in graceful masses over the narrow ravines.

Our range of vision was somewhat limited as we followed the course of the streams, but the glimpses of the hills immediately around us, and occasionally of the mountains further off, seen through breaks in the nearer line, were most charming. At length we left the plain behind, and began the ascent of a wooded hill along a stony pathway, where immense trees rose to a great height, with enormous woody creepers encircling them, and ferns growing on the rough, damp surface of the bark. The hill was of sandstone, and probably rose a thousand feet above the plain; and from the top we looked through distant vistas of most attractive scenery. The clouds obscured the higher mountains, so that we could not be sure of the exact location of the high ranges toward which our journey was tending, and we felt the need of some one familiar with the country to point out the direction of the places

to be visited; however, we enjoyed the beauties near at hand. Behind us lay the fine plain of Ta-mán-teen, broken in many places by ridges of wooded hills, and cut into numerous attractive valleys, while before us the large plain of Fan-lun stretched like a broad basin set among the hills. The curling smoke showed the position of some of the villages, and the open spaces, which formed but a small proportion of the whole extent, indicated the rice fields and pasture lands.

The descent of the hill proved much more gradual than the ascent had been, and the fields under cultivation were larger and in better positions than those previously passed. The fields were surrounded by picket fences, and the fresh young shrubs of which they were composed were taking root in many places, sending out new leaves and shoots, showing how the fences might grow into solid living barriers. These fields have but one opening, which is kept carefully closed while the crop is ripening, and at each corner is a trap for capturing wild pigs and other animals that destroy the crops. This trap is like a large cage made in the fence itself, the opening being about six inches above the ground. It is wide at the mouth, but converges to a point three or four feet beyond the open work, the lower portion being made of stout bars, between which the feet of the animal slip, and the whole is held in its place by strong stakes and bands, which even the most powerful wild boar, deprived of the use of his feet, which are thrust through the interstices of the bars, could not break through. When pigs are found in the field the gate is carefully closed, and they are driven into the corners, where they plunge unsuspectingly into

the trap, and are despatched by men with spears, who wait for them on the outside.

Descending the hill by a path that is overshadowed by fine trees, we come to a small river, which is forded in the usual way, and in a few minutes are in the midst of a little village, the first of those that bear the name of Fan-lun. We are conducted by our sprightly young Le to the best house in the place, and are made to feel as we enter, that the house and all it contains are ours for the time being, by the laws of hospitality. Built on the same pattern as the one described above, it is scarcely half the size, and is too limited to accommodate our whole company; but all fear of overcrowding is dispelled by the offer of the house adjoining for the use of our bearers. The men of the house were absent, as was also the mother, leaving an old grandmother and a little maid of thirteen in charge, with a small child to be cared for. The old woman was a wild-looking specimen, with uncombed hair, a wrinkled, grimy, blue-streaked face, a black mouth reeking with betel-nut juice, tattered clothes that covered but a small portion of her scraggy frame, and a loud, rasping voice, that was likely to frighten even when she meant to please. The little maid was a charming contrast to the old granddame, and was in reality the mistress of the house. She took efficient direction of all matters connected with our lodging, and seemed to feel the weight of care resting upon her. She was slight and graceful in form, was neatly dressed in a long clean skirt and an embroidered jacket, and was adorned with pink earrings and three light blue lines across her chin. The little child clung

to her skirt, while the old woman rushed about sputtering and gesturing, but she took the oversight of everything with a serious face, that never relaxed into a smile.

It was after dark when the family returned, the father, mother, and son, a young man of twenty, with their burdens of rice freshly cut from some distant field. The child rushed to its mother the instant she entered the door, and was received with a quiet show of real affection that was touching to see. The mother was a kind, benevolent-looking woman, with a gentle, soothing voice. The father took his seat beside the fire, while the son assumed direction of the house. This we learned was the usual custom. The young people are in authority, and every question of food, lodging, or purchase of articles is referred to them. In all our intercourse with this family, the father appeared in no way. The daughter received us when we came, and the son directed everything after his return, providing food, receiving payment for lodging, etc. The supply of rice was small, but our host sent out to the neighbours and borrowed a sufficient quantity to meet all our wants. The rice they had just brought in was still wet from the rain, and was placed in bamboo trays suspended over the fire, preparatory to being stowed away in ricks. Their harvests are gathered under very difficult circumstances. The fields are often distant, the rain soaks the grain, and it all has to be carried into the house and dried over the fire before it can be safely stowed away. The particular kind of rice most widely cultivated is that called "dry rice," which is grown on the uplands without flooding the fields.

They also grow a superior quality of maize, of which

we saw a good supply in almost every house. The ears were large and well developed, the corn white, and of an excellent flavour. From the rafters of the house hung hundreds of fine ears with the husk partly stripped off, the whole thoroughly dried and preserved by the constant heat and smoke from the fire. The extensive cultivation of maize by these aboriginal tribes, and also by the Ius in the Lien-chow district, touches a very interesting question in botany—namely, the source whence this grain was introduced into China. It has generally been accepted as a botanical fact, that America is the native country of the maize or Indian corn, from which it has spread to other lands. The late Mr. Mayers, however, quotes from Chinese authors to show that it was well known and cultivated in China within a comparatively short period after the discovery of America, and further, that while they knew it to be an exotic, they believed it to have come from Central Asia, not even hinting that it might have been introduced by Europeans. These early notices of it would seem to prove that it did not come to China from America, unless it was brought by the Portuguese sea-rovers, who ravaged the southern coast of China in the first half of the sixteenth century, which seems improbable, since they were bent on pillage, and were not likely to be interested in propagating a new and curious grain. From whatever source it came, it soon gained favour. It is now very extensively cultivated by the Chinese, but especially by the aboriginal peoples, among whom it seems to be almost as great a favourite as it is among the American Indians. It forms a main portion of the sustenance of both the Aborigines in the

north-west corner of Kwang-tung, and of those in Hainan. The ease with which it can be cultivated in the hilly country they inhabit, and the rich return of grain it yields for the labour expended, are probably the reasons for its extensive cultivation.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE HOMES OF THE ABORIGINES.



IN the evening, as at the first village, from each of the eight families composing the town, numerous representatives gathered in, not, however, disturbing to any great extent the domestic routine of the household. The rice in the great kettle was boiled until it was quite soft, which, with an attendant dish of greens and some salt fish that we had supplied, composed the evening meal. The whole family sat down together, each facing as the other. The utensils used were Chinese bowls and chopsticks. This union of the family at meals and in general intercourse was a very pleasant feature in all the villages we visited. The true idea of family life seems to be realised among these so-called savages in a higher degree than among their Chinese neighbours. The Chinese, not understanding, or perhaps directly misinterpreting, their freedom of intercourse, accuse them of a lack of propriety and of immorality. As to the truth or otherwise of the latter charge, we had no means of ascertaining; but all our observation went to prove that there was much real affection and sympathy among the members of the same family.

Many inquiries for medicine led my friend to prepare some rheumatism plasters, the process being watched with the deepest interest by the people. It was not long before the whole town was afflicted by a sudden and severe attack of rheumatism, which soon exhausted my friend's supply of plasters. We felt sure that the irritation caused by the application of the plasters was greater, in most cases, than any they had suffered from actual disease; but they all took a real delight in using the medicine, and professed to receive great relief. Interesting as this was to most of them, it failed to keep our little maid awake, her duties as hostess ending when her brother came. She had retired, and after supper laid down beside her mother, and was soon fast asleep, tired out by the unusual duties of the day. No further proof of a true affection was needed than the sight of that gentle mother, herself weary with a hard day's toil, the babe in her lap, happy in her loving care, and the faithful little maid asleep on her shoulder.

After these indications of weariness on the part of our host's family, we hastened to signify our desire to retire, and submitting to the usual curious, but not annoying inspection of our belongings, prepared to put up our beds. It was a pleasant surprise to find the bamboos for our canvas cots ready without a word from us, and made us feel we were among a most kind and hospitable people. Immediately over our heads were the usual implements of the chase, bows, arrows, spears, and nets, with a formidable row of jawbones, and a liberal supply of deer feet and sinews, which exhaled a rather unsavoury odour.

While my friend was distributing the rheumatic plasters I strayed over to the other house, where a number of people, who had already satisfied their curiosity, and departed, were gathered around a fire in the middle of the room, listening to the faint, but not unmusical, jangling of a rude guitar, which one of the Les was playing. It was a quiet, social scene that I came upon, and my coming in no way interrupted the friendly intercourse of the company. I was politely greeted, and a block of wood, the only seat used, offered me. How I longed for the gift of tongues to converse with them and know what they were saying; but beyond a few questions and answers laboriously transmitted in a mangled form through our interpreter, no words passed between us.

They have a very graceful way of greeting a guest, which is done by extending the arms, placing the open hands with the finger tips touching, or nearly so, and drawing them inwards with an inviting motion. They bid farewell in a similarly graceful fashion, extending the open hands with the palms upward and slightly inclined outward, in a movement as if handing one on his way. In giving a present the gesture of greeting is used, signifying their desire to do you a favour, while in receiving a gift the gesture of departure is used in a deprecating way, to express their unworthiness to receive it. I often noticed when people from other villages came, how particular they were to give them the proper greeting, while among those who were more familiar with each other, or met more frequently, the elaborate and graceful form degenerated into a simple quick movement of the hand.

The headman of this section, who is called the Tsung-Kun, resides in the central and largest village two miles from the one in which we lodged. The heavy rain prevented our going further that day, but, being anxious to pay our respects to him, we were inquiring for a messenger by whom to send our cards with expressions of regret that we had failed to meet him, when the chief himself appeared. He was not a man of striking presence, and his Hainanese vocabulary being rather limited, conversation with him was not very fluent. We made a cup of tea, and asked if he would have milk and sugar; his usual beverage being the native wine, as the rosy hue of his countenance indicated, he was not a connoisseur in tea, and said he would drink it as we did. Our friendly relations were then sealed over a mild decoction of sou-chong and some biscuits, which he toasted in a cautious manner, with a present of tobacco added to secure his goodwill. He wrote his name for us in Chinese, pronouncing it Po-iao, the slow and halting way in which he wrote showing plainly that this was the utmost limit of his literary attainments. He was kind and civil, and gave us a very pressing invitation to visit him and spend several days in his village. Our plans would not permit us to do this, as we were then preparing to start, so that we might reach the village of Loi-bún before dark.

Owing to the rain and some business transaction of the Chinaman, whose Le bearer was to act as our guide, we were detained till nearly noon. While waiting we searched the village for signs of worship, but could find nothing in any of the houses that we could call an idol,

the only thing approaching to it being some wooden charms, put up at each of the four corners of the house. These resembled very much the bamboo stakes, covered with peculiarly twisted characters, which the Chinese set up when preparing to build a house. I concluded they were the same, although the opinion was expressed by some that the writing was not Chinese. We took the opportunity to observe more closely the people who gathered in through the morning, and noted three distinct styles of dress among the women. The one which resembled that at Ta-mán-teen was worn by the family of our host, and by most of those in the village. Others were dressed in a still longer skirt, that almost touched the ground, their jackets, always of dark material, being also of a slightly different pattern. The third style was very different from these, the short skirt reaching only half-way to the knees, while the jacket was made without any opening before or behind, the whole being slipped over the head, and cut out with a deep yoke at the back and front. The men showed two styles of dress, that of the chief, our host, and others being much like the Chinese, while the others discarded trowsers, two long flaps of cloth doing duty in their place, with sleeveless jackets, ornamented with a fringe around the bottom, to complete their costume. These latter, we were told, bore the surname Iao, while the other rejoiced in the more honorable one of Pó.

The women weave the cloth for their garments and those of the men, except when the latter prefer Chinese cloth. We examined a pretty handloom, which the little maid had been using when we arrived. It was of

polished hard wood, beautifully carved, and the piece of cloth in process of being woven was about a foot and a half wide, and made of some strong material like heavy grass-linen. Over the door as we entered there hung a fine new skirt, woven in various colours, and reserved, perhaps, to form a part of the young lady's trousseau. The women with the much-abbreviated skirts wore peculiar earrings, in the shape of keys.

In attempting to walk about, we found the town, one mass of mud, and in a compound beside the house stood some water buffaloes, almost buried in the reeking mass, in which they seemed to revel. Fowls were abundant, but none for sale; while the pigs, large and small, far outnumbered the people; and dogs, wretched-looking, half-starved curs, went sneaking about the houses. These dogs, left, as they were, to find food for themselves, were the most forlorn-looking creatures we saw. During most of the time we were in the house several of them were constantly under the heels of the people, snapping and snarling in a very vicious manner. One of them attacked our little maid, and bit her severely on the heel, and as the wound showed signs of festering, she bravely submitted to an operation, the affected part having to be partially cut away and the wound cauterised. This operation had to be performed twice before we left, and, as we hope, saved her from an ugly and dangerous sore. It seemed too bad that she, the kindest and best of them all, should be the victim. The dressing of this wound encouraged a young man, who was suffering from a large bamboo splinter in his foot to have the piece of wood extracted and the wound cauterised. I mention

these cases to show that we had been misinformed, when told that the Les would not touch our medicines or accept any of our remedies for physical relief.

Our delay, which we were disposed to fret over, was to bring us yet another benefit. During the night a large wild boar had been caught in one of the traps described above, and was brought to one of the adjoining houses to be cut up. We, of course, came in for a share of this delicacy, the people wishing to present us with some of the choice portions. We insisted on paying for it, and enjoyed the rare provision, the meat proving to be of excellent quality.* The long tapering snout and protruding tusks of the animal looked very formidable, even as it lay dead under the knife. The whole body was a mass of fine meat, his active life having allowed no surplus fat to accumulate. 。

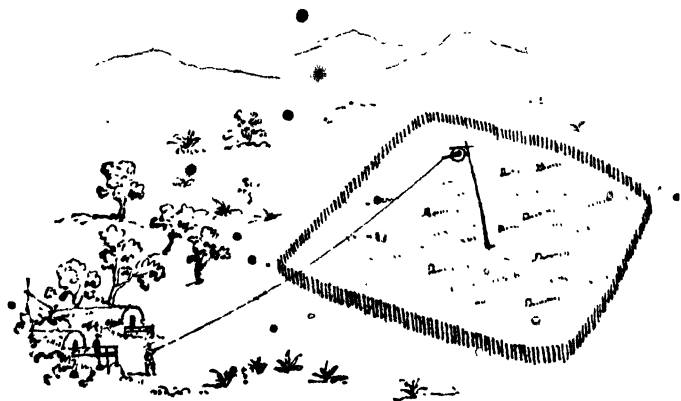
As we were about to leave, the kind house-mother took two or three of the finest ears of maize and roasted them for us in an iron kettle, adding a little oil to keep them from burning. The popping of this corn in the dingy corner of that small Le house, brought back in vivid remembrance the scenes of days long gone, when, by the kitchen fire of a dear old home, in a far-off land, with the wintry wind and the snow outside, the blazing fire and popping corn made sport for the boys and girls inside. Filling our pockets with the white and spongy kernels still hot from the pan, we were prepared to keep off the pangs of hunger until the next town was reached. At first taste we detected a peculiar flavour, which we found was due to the oil used in preparing it. Upon inquiry we learned that the oil used for this and for all

cooking purposes, and as fuel for lamps as well, was that of the castor bear. As we passed out of the village we saw some fine specimens of this plant ten and twelve feet high, covered with large clusters of robust fruit. The peculiar taste is rather disagreeable at first, but soon ceases to be unpleasant, scarcely suggesting even the formidable article procured at the apothecary's.

It was still raining when we left Fan-lun, and the roads were consequently the reverse of clean and hard. Fortunately we had but little climbing of hills to do, else there might have been another mutiny among our bearers, it being impossible to secure fresh men at Fan-lun. The Chinaman who had excited our dislike so strongly at first had changed his tactics, and made himself as agreeable as possible, offering help in many ways. His headquarters as agent for Le goods were in the village of Loi-bún, our next stopping-place. And among other things he promised to secure additional bearers for us there. We placed ourselves under his guidance, or rather that of his Le bearer, as we resumed our journey. The road led us some distance to the left of the chief's village, but many of his people, hearing of our approach, came out to see the unusual sight. Among them we saw a perfect albino, who, when specially noticed, tried to hide himself behind a tree; the pink skin, whitish hair and eyebrows, and weak eyes, were all well-marked, and from his shrinking manner I surmised that he was subjected to more or less indignity because of his misfortune.

We passed by and through many cultivated fields, in some of which the grain was standing half ripe, and in

others already reaped and stowed in ricks. These ricks were high and narrow structures with grass roofs, under which the grain in sheaves was piled up to the height of twelve or fifteen feet, whence it would be taken to be threshed or hulled, as the necessities of the family required. Around one extensive field of sweet potatoes was a border of large leaves, with white under surfaces, fastened by little stakes at intervals of a few feet, the white surfaces turned outward presenting a peculiar effect



CONTRIVANCE TO SCARE BIRDS FROM A FIELD.

along the whole circumference of the field. It was probably a charm used in hope of securing a plentiful crop in the field. The same thing was afterwards seen in several places. In one field heaps of these white leaves were set up, as it seemed, for scarecrows. In another field we saw a hoop, fastened to the top of a long pole, enclosing half-a-dozen bamboo slips, with a long rattan line attached, which reached to a place outside the enclosure. By pulling this rattan line the

bamboo slips are brought together with a sharp, clacking sound, which effectually drives off the crows and other feathered thieves from the grain. In some places these lines extend a long distance to the village, and can be pulled from the door of the house itself. When the clacking sound was first heard, we were at a loss to know whence it came, supposing it to be made by some beast or large bird.

After a three miles' walk we passed through two villages, both called Fung-ma. We stopped in the farther one while our Chinese attendant regaled himself with opium, and we indulged in the milder refreshment of a cup of chocolate. The people who gathered about us seemed to be much darker in complexion than those hitherto seen. They were short and stout, with rather a gloomy cast of countenance. The men were in fiercely savage costume, and the women in skirts and jackets like the ruder portion of the people in Fan-lun. They were tattooed with only a few faint lines, and wore fringed head-dresses and tasseled earrings. The free use of the betel nut increased their lack of charms. The house in which we stopped was divided into several rooms. Gilt paper and Chinese charms were put up over the door and in several places inside. A good supply of maize hung from the beams of the room, and heaps of bones, awaiting transportation to some Chinese market, covered the floor. Two fine Caryota palms of unusual height were the chief ornament of the town. Soon after leaving this place we met a man with a fine set of antlers from a large deer of the species *Cervus rusa*, freshly killed. The horns were carefully wrapped in paper to prevent injury

to articles so highly prized in Chinese pharmacy. The man offered them to us for three hundred cash (30 cents)



• THE CARYOTA PALM.

—about one-hundredth of the price asked for similar ones in Canton—and was willing to add the skin, which he had left at home, for a thousand cash (one dollar) more.

Our journey this day led us chiefly along the water-courses through attractive country, fine hills and mountains rising on either side. We had to cross streams knee deep and upwards about a score of times, the most difficult passage of this kind being over the main stream about five miles from Fan-lun. The stream was somewhat more than a hundred yards wide, the water waist deep, and flowing in a swift current. We crossed on the shoulders of our dumb coolie, who was equal in strength to any two of the others, and who, with a staff to support him on one side, and our tallest bearer to hold him up a little on the other, bore us safely and comfortably across. In the constant wading which travelling in this country necessitates, we found strong canvas shoes, with openings for the free egress of water, to be the most comfortable. After one or two soakings leather becomes useless, but the canvas, if strong, will stand a great deal of such usage without breaking, unless, as happened with us, the sharp stones cut it too freely.

Ascending the bed of the small river, we came in a few minutes to the village of Káp-how, the largest and finest yet seen. The houses were built high above the ground, and seemed much superior to those already described. The town contains about twenty families, the chief residing in the best and most commodious house. We stopped before his door while he pressed us to remain. The spirit of hospitality shown was surprising. They besought us to give them one day, at least, promising to lead us by a nearer route to Uen-mun, the town we were aiming at, some twelve or fifteen miles beyond. The chief, a fine-looking elderly man, was very cordial

in his entreaties, but we had set out for the other village, Loi-hán, under promise of fresh men, and thought it best not to change our plan. The houses in Káp-how had elevated porticoes, on which many women, dressed in embroidered clothes, with a great profusion of blue lines over their faces and arms, gathered to look at us. We felt a real regret at not being able to accept the hospitality so freely and heartily offered.

As we entered the village our attention was attracted by the notice of a feast, written in Chinese on the freshly-cut surface of a wooden post, and set up in a conspicuous place by the roadside. In large characters at the top were the words, "Seek peace at the shrines of the gods;" while below, in smaller characters, was the announcement that from the twenty-seventh of the ninth month, until the first of the tenth, the festival would be held in the village adjoining. A general invitation was given to friends and relations to attend, each being instructed to bring three catties (about four pounds) of pork, three catties of wine, and some money for incense. Had we not been detained so long in Nam-fung, we should have arrived just in time to witness this festival, and have had an excellent opportunity to observe some of their religious rites; but unfortunately we were several days too late. Near the entrance of this and the preceding village we saw small altars, on which were signs of recent worship.

As we proceeded, signs of a larger population and more extensive cultivation of the land were apparent. Several villages were passed, from one of which some men came out and urged us to go to their houses, but

time would not permit. Two men, who carried guns accompanied us from one of these villages, one of whom was very friendly. He was slightly under the influence of wine, which did not make him rude, but only voluble. He said he was from Loi-bân, and that we were to put up at his house. This being said in the presence of our guide, who did not contradict it, we supposed he was telling the truth. As we went along, he apologised for the poor accommodation he had to offer. His supply of bedding was small, he said, so that he could offer us but little more than a mat to sleep on; we assured him that we were amply supplied. After a short interval he said it was damp and chilly, and we would need changes of clothing; he was, however, ashamed to offer us his poor garments, but he had no others. Again we told him that he need not be concerned, as we had sufficient clothing with us. His mind was evidently relieved, and he seemed anxious to anticipate any other wants we should chance to feel.

We followed him at a rapid pace, and were much delighted when he led us to a large house built about ten feet from the ground, and ascended the ladder with a feeling of relief that our wet, disagreeable tramp was over for the day. A little servant maid brought water in a bright brass basin for us to wash our feet. We removed our water-soaked shoes, and entered the neat and pleasant interior, where a fire was burning, and clean mats were spread over the floor, which was made of split bamboos. It was the most comfortable house we had seen, and we were congratulating ourselves on finding such good quarters, when shouts from our party called

us out to the portico, only to learn that our host, in his desire to have us share his hospitality, had deceived us as to the name and situation of his village. We were in Kwai-fa, and still nearly two miles from Loi-bán. It was not until we were assured that the people in Loi-bán would be expecting us, and that the houses there were as good as the one we were in, that we consented to leave so pleasant a house and so genial a host. Apologising for the trouble we had given him, and inviting him, if possible, to meet us in Loi-bán in the evening, we left. He promised to follow us later on, and, if we were disposed to engage in such sport, would take us out wild-pig hunting at night. It seems to be the general custom in this country to hunt wild pigs at night, but this time, unfortunately, the rain interfered with any plans our friend may have had in that line.

The house to which we were taken in Loi-bán was not so neat and attractive as the one we had left, but was quite large and comfortable. Subsequent measurement showed it to be eighty feet long, twenty feet wide, fifteen feet high from the floor to the highest point in the roof; the frame was oval, and was raised nearly ten feet from the ground at the front, where a covered portico twenty feet square extended outside the door. The back of the house stood against the hill, and the space beneath was given up to domestic fowls and animals, the straw thatch extending to the ground on three sides. The town contains twelve houses, some of them much smaller than the one we occupied. As we entered the people greeted our Chinese travelling com-

panion in a familiar and friendly manner. He had an associate in the village who had been there for ten years, but had not learned to speak the Le dialect, the Hainanese being so generally spoken by all the people as to render a knowledge of the Le unnecessary.

In nearly every village we found two or three Chinamen, seldom more. They come as agents for goods, and oftentimes acquire great influence over the Les, who seem to stand much in awe of them. They control what little business is done, act as money-changers, write notices of feasts, and records of various kinds, are called "Tin-teh," "Master," by the people, and are often very overbearing in their speech and action toward them. We felt at this place, and more strongly at a subsequent stage of the journey, that it was to our disadvantage to be connected with these Chinese in any way, as the Les regarded us more or less suspiciously in consequence. They seem, without exception, to be a bad lot. While much in fear of them, we were glad to see that the Les were not entirely under their control, as was proved on one occasion in our presence, when the Chinaman who had brought us hither became very loud and offensive in his talk, and our host quietly told him if he did not subside he must leave his house. The effect of these words was immediate and salutary. It was difficult for us to know how to act, fearing, on the one hand, to give offence to the Chinaman, lest he should use his influence with the Les to our injury, and fearing, on the other hand, that the Les might misinterpret any friendliness between us, to mean that our designs were the same as the Chinaman's. On this occasion the Chinaman was true to his promise to secure

us fresh bearers, one of whom was the bright young fellow who guided us from Fan-lun, and who lived in this village. He introduced us to his family, father, wife, and little child, and showed us the little hut in which they were then living, their former large house having been destroyed by fire a year before. The Chinaman also did us another good service in getting some money exchanged for us.

We found the money question a very troublesome one. Copper cash are the only coin current, but they are so heavy, a dollar in cash weighing about eight pounds, that it requires an additional bearer for every five dollars taken. Silver being at a great discount, one has to carry a large supply of these fearfully heavy cash, or pay out silver at the rate of sixty or seventy cents to the dollar, unless he is fortunate to come upon a Chinaman who will give him a fair exchange of copper cash for his silver. These wandering Chinese are, without exception, as far as we could learn, heavy opium smokers, and are gradually introducing the vice among the Les. In the first half of our journey through the country we met with but one Le who had formed the habit of smoking opium, and he could go for days without it. Many of them said they liked it, and smoked it when the Chinamen were willing to let them have it, but the habit had not yet been formed. In the latter part of our journey, however, we passed through some villages where intercourse with the Chinese is more frequent, and there we saw many who were enslaved by it. The contrast between these and the people in the first district passed, was most striking. The latter, who knew little of opium, were strong, healthy,

bright, and active, while the former were dull, emaciated, and altogether wretched and unpromising.

The prophylactic benefits of opium in these malarious districts are not so evident as some theorists imagine, observation showing that under the very same climate, those who do not use it are robust, healthy, and physically models of strength, while those who use it are weak, emaciated, and utterly without energy. At present the only safeguard for these people is their poverty, very few being able to indulge in even the outside shells and scrapings, or in the opium dross, which is chiefly used by the Chinese who go among them. The friendly reception accorded us, the simplicity and apparent docility of the people, have led me to believe that the way is fully opened for the introduction of Christianity among them, with a fair hope of its being widely and heartily accepted by them, and that, with the introduction of the Gospel, a moral barrier against the spread of opium would be raised, stronger even than the restraints of poverty.

The rain detained us two days in Loi-bán, but did not interfere with the people from the neighbouring villages coming to see us in large numbers. Among them was the son of the chief at Káp-how, who came on horseback, and our friend from Kwai-fa, a little less talkative, but very friendly, evidently cherishing no illwill because we declined to remain at his house. He brought a handkerchief we had forgotten in our hurried leave-taking, and was made happy with a box of matches and some tobacco we gave him. He was anxious to get some books, and finally selected a New Testament, promising to send about four pounds of rice in payment; we hardly expected

to hear anything more about it, but before we left the rice in full measure was sent. This and many other little incidents showed the people to be honest, at least in their dealings with us. We found it necessary to open out all our baggage, both to dry our things, and rearrange the loads for the bearers, and in doing this the things were freely scattered about the portico, where scores of Les were coming and going all the day. While studiously avoiding any appearance of watching them, we quietly took note of their actions, and it was with great satisfaction that we saw there was not the slightest attempt to pilfer even the smallest article, and so it was everywhere. Our Chinese bearers committed little thefts of food and salt, but the Les, as far as our observation went, were as honest as ourselves.

As the people gathered about us we were struck with the fine physique of many of them. Some were small, it is true, very small, but most of the men would measure five feet nine and ten inches in height, and were well proportioned. Many of them wore moustaches and slight beards. Their features were rather square, their noses not so flat as those of the Chinese, and their eyes of a different type. The women were a fair counterpart of the men, several of those we saw being decidedly handsome, notwithstanding the blue streaks over their faces. There were two who belonged to our host's family who were especially noticeable. One was tall and slender, with an oval face and perfect features, graceful carriage, and a somewhat haughty expression. The other was rather short, with a dark olive complexion, and soft, expressive eyes. Each had a small child, of which she

was very fond. Their dress was much like that previously noticed, but with more embroidery, and an abundance of small glass beads worn in the skirts that glistened as they moved. All the parts of the body not covered were thickly tattooed, their arms and legs being covered with large blue rings. They wore embroidered turbans, and had tassels hanging from their earrings and jacket-strings. On the back of the jacket was a peculiar strip of cloth, with some mystic characters embroidered, which were, perhaps, the scraps of *Le ballads* to which Chinese writers refer. One woman was in the process of being tattooed, and looked very much as if she had been forming an intimate acquaintance with some dusky sister's finger-nails. The process is very simple. An incision is made with a sharp knife in the shape of the pattern given, and, while fresh, ordinary Chinese ink is introduced, which gives it a blue tinge, and in a few days it begins to heal. It needed some such powerful incentive as the desire to see the white strangers to bring the lady out while undergoing this mild self-torture. The women all looked happy and contented. They carried water in small jars, suspended from poles across the shoulders, going down cheerfully through the mud to the brook, where abundance of fresh, sweet water is always found. Part of the time they were busy pounding rice, sometimes rising at or before daylight, and awakening us with the sound of their wooden pestles, three or four of them sometimes pounding together in one large wooden mortar, keeping time in their strokes, and tapping the side of the mortar at intervals.

Another thing that struck us was their robust health.

In an ordinary Chinese gathering of the same size we should have found many sick and diseased people; but here we could almost say that every one we saw was in perfect health. One man, it is true, came forward and said he had been attacked by the Hakkas, who had stolen his cattle, and beaten him so that he had never since been strong; another had been knocked down in a village quarrel, and trampled upon so that his joints were always stiff; one woman was brought who was nearly blind, but these were all who seemed in need of help. Their health is remarkable, and is a strong argument in favour of their climate, which, barring a little excessive dampness, seems to be a good one. Their simple diet, their clear, fresh water, and their light, airy houses, have also much to do with their general healthiness. Notwithstanding this they were eager for medicine, the favourite remedy at this place being some sweet-flavoured cough mixture. It was astonishing to see how quickly they developed colds and coughs after the bottle of this cordial was opened. We did not see many old people; the dampness and mud prevented their coming out, we were told. In one of the neighbouring houses we heard some one repeating Buddhistic prayers with great energy over a sick child. As the people must die, we were anxious to know something of their burial rites, but were surprised at the entire absence of graves. In all our journey no tomb, nor any sign of burial places, was seen, and all our inquiries failed to elicit any intelligible account of what they do with their dead. Either through our want of understanding, or their dislike to speak on the subject, the answers given were most vague and

irrelevant. The substance of all we could learn was that they place the body without a coffin in any secluded spot, taking care to replace the earth, and cover it over so that it may not be recognised.

In Loi-bán we tried to learn by what names the Les call themselves, and were told the following:—At Loi-bán and within a circuit of ten miles of that place, they are called B'lay. At Uen-mun, about twelve miles south, the name is B'ly; in another district, of which I failed to get the name, they are called S'lay; at Ta-han, across the ridge toward the Five-Finger Mountain, they are called H'ay; while at Pok-sha-tung, fifteen miles south-west of Nam-fung, their name is Moi. It is a remarkable fact, and shows the common origin of the two people, that some tribes of the Aborigines in Cochin-China are called Moi. I give these names as I heard them, without any fixed theory as to their correctness or value. We tried also to find out if the Les, among whom we had now been for several days, were of the "shang" or the "shuk"—that is, of the "wild" or "tame" section; but these terms seemed quite unintelligible to them, and in answer to our questions they would begin to enumerate the various tribes, as the Hak-shims, the Tai-shims, the Kon-keuks, the Ha-les, the Miu-les, the Shan-mius, the Pok-sha-tungs, etc. When told that this was not what we wished, they would then give the names according to the Chinese territorial divisions, saying they were King-shan Les, and that ten miles further, after crossing the ridge, we would come to the Ting-on-Les; but when asked about their being "shang" or "shuk," they would shake their heads and say they did not know. We

appealed to the Chinese who lived among them, but they simply compromised, or rather confused, matters by saying they were "pun-shang, pun-shuk"—that is, "half wild and half tame." We concluded that these terms were simply used by the outside Chinese as a convenient way of classifying them.

The town of Loi-bán is composed of five villages within the circuit of a few miles, the chief one being the old village, Loi-ban-lo-tsuen, about two miles up the valley. They are all under control of the chief at Káp-how, but have a headman or sub-chief living in the main village. High hills rise on either side of the stream, along which the town lies, shutting out entirely any distant views of the country. Going up the hill behind the village we could see something of our surroundings, and were charmed with the ranges of hills and mountains, some rising to a great height, near at hand. Twin Caryota palms, nearly two feet in diameter, stand like guardians behind the village. In the groves below flocks of birds in gay plumage kept flying in and out among the trees. They were probably a kind of paroquet which abounds in this region, one of the mountains being called "Paroquet Ridge."

The people here, beside farming their rough mountain clearings, raise cattle in considerable numbers, and to all appearance seem to be in quite comfortable circumstances, having a sufficiency of food and clothing, and good houses to live in. They all, men, women, and often the children, smoke tobacco, their pipe stems being usually of fine, polished ebony. Many of the young men have scarlet and embroidered tobacco pouches. The

gifts are often the handiwork of their wives or admirers. The favour with which they regarded us was expressed in a strong desire to have us return and establish schools among them. As we were about to leave I tried to obtain some of the women's garments as curiosities, but they demurred, saying their wardrobes were too scanty to allow them to part with anything, and finally, when urged, asked such an exorbitant price that I gave it up. Neither would they part with any of the bone trophies, of which we saw a great variety stuck along the rafters; bones not only of the larger animals, such as we saw in the preceding villages, but of hares, water-rats, birds, turtles, etc. There seems to be some charm or superstition about these bones that forbids their parting with them; it may be a simple pride that leads them to preserve these trophies as evidences of their skill in the chase. We saw bows made of dark elastic wood, with rattan strings and bamboo arrows, tipped with iron; but game being scarce, there was no increase of the store of triumphal bones during our stay.

CHAPTER XXIV.

IN THE HEART OF THE ISLAND.



WELL rested and reinforced, we continued our way up the narrow valley, an escort from the village accompanying us some distance. We passed through Loi-bán, an old village, which was not so pleasantly situated as the one we had left. At the entrance was an ingenious spring-gate, with an elastic piece of wood in the shape of a bow, which caused it to swing and shut as soon as the pressure of the hand was removed. In this town we found a Chinaman from the neighbourhood of Canton, and astonished him by addressing him in his native dialect. He was living in a wretched, little, damp clay hovel, which, with the usual prejudice of his race, he preferred to the more airy and comfortable houses of the natives. Before him, as we entered, were spread a number of books transcribed in a neat hand, proving to us that we were in the presence of the one man of letters in the neighbourhood. He combined the pursuit of fortune-telling with that of keeping various records, and acting scribe-in-general for the people. We passed the residence of the sub-chief, who had also visited us in Loi-bán. He was a thin, spare man, well dressed in a suit of dark-blue Chinese clothes,

and was so quiet and unobtrusive that it was some time before we were aware of his position.

He wore bracelets of the Ch'um-hueng wood (*Aquilaria agallochum*), which is so highly esteemed by the Chinese for its medicinal properties, the Les also regarding it in a similar way. It is used in many ways, the most common, however, being in the form of bracelets to ward off malaria, cholera, and other diseases. If one is taken ill he scrapes a little wood from the surface of the bracelet, and, mixing it in a cup of tea, drinks it in full faith that it will cure him. This wood is one of the chief articles of trade in Hainan, and is sent as tribute to the emperor. It is very rare, and can be found in quantities only among the less accessible mountains of the interior. The Les often accumulate and hide it away as a reserve fund for use in emergencies. I have been told of one family further south who have a piece concealed whose value they estimate at ten thousand taels (\$14,000). There are other species of hard and fragrant woods found in the hills, some of which we saw lying along the streams in the form of square timbers, about twelve feet long and six inches square at the end, waiting for high water to float them down; and as we walked along our guide chipped off a piece from a half-burnt tree of a dark-red hue and very fragrant.

In going up this valley, we were hemmed in by high hills, with clouds hanging over their summits and far down their sides. The stream did not add much to our comfort, as we had to cross it thirty times this day in a distance of six miles. For two miles of the way the path lay in the stream itself, and it was hard travelling against the



CROSSING A STREAM IN THE LE COUNTRY.

current, the water being scarcely ever less than knee deep, and the rocks were both sharp and slippery. In some places there were rapids which tumbled the water over the rocks in a picturesque way, and threatened to upset us as we strove to wade across. High precipices, covered with thick masses of vines, and fringed with trees, added much to the romantic beauty of the narrow gorge we were ascending. The sides of these steep walls of rock were in some places almost covered with chiritas (*Chirita chinensis*) in bloom.

Two small villages, called To-ko and Ly-chee, were passed just before we reached Ka-la for our noon-day rest. The road, except where it was merged in the stream, was fairly good, but it would have been impossible to carry a sedan chair along it, and even the sure-footed ponies used on the island would find it hard to keep their foothold in places. Our Le bearers led us by the nearest route across fields, which we entered over stiles rudely made by notched logs placed on either side of the fences. At Ka-la we met an old Le from a little hamlet high up on the hills, who could read and write a little, and, what was still more rare, could speak a few words of Cantonese, which he had learned from the merchants in Nam-fung and Ling-mun. From him we gained much useful information about the country. On our right, behind Ka-la, rose a conspicuous ridge with three prominent peaks towering above the surrounding hills, the central one castellated, and the whole formed of whitish rock, suggesting the name, "Pák-shek-ling," "White Stone Ridge." These peaks are a fine landmark, being visible, when the clouds are off, for many miles.

It was a great relief to reach Kwai-fung, the last village at the head of the valley, and to find a comfortable house to rest in. This little hamlet, perched on a steep hillside, contains but six houses, but is rich in hospitality, as we proved in our two days' sojourn there. It is also called Iu-tau—"Pomelo-village," the Hainanese equivalent for its Le name; and a large pomelo tree at the entrance, left standing, though dead, was pointed out as a proof that the name was not quite a misnomer. Our experience here was in many respects a repetition of what we had gone through at the other towns. Our presence in the country being generally known, many people came from the more or less distant villages on either side to see us. Their reception by our host gave us a fair example of the hospitality practised by these people among themselves. Our host's ordinary family numbered not more than five or six, but while there we saw at least fifteen seated around his rice kettle at each meal, among them the sub-chief from Loi-bán, who had come to see us safely to the verge of his jurisdiction, and the old Le from Ka-la, who was anxious to guide us across the hills to Ling-shui.

Around the two fireplaces, which were only square sections in the floor made solid with clay, in the place of the usual split bamboos, they sat in large numbers, smoking and chatting. Their curiosity never once reached the point of annoyance. They seemed to be of a lighter hue than most of those previously seen, some of the unclad children being almost white. The men nearly all shaved their heads, and wore Chinese clothes, the dress of the women being the same as that seen before, with

the addition of a small apron over the chest. Very few of them were tattooed, and those with only a few light lines. They added, however, another ornament, in the shape of great circlets of beads, white and black, strung on wire, one in particular, who attracted our attention, having twenty circlets of varying diameters, which must have hung as a great weight on her neck. She was from Punctet, a still smaller hamlet, which we had passed a few rods away.

In place of the ordinary bamboos for our beds, our host in this place brought in some young trees of very aromatic wood, which, when the bark was removed, gave forth a most pleasant odour, so that we slept on veritable perfumed couches. In the house were six idols, evidently Chinese importations, set up in a box at one end of the room, and in putting up our beds the question was debated as to what relative position to the idols they should occupy. We told them to please themselves in the matter, as to us the idols were nothing; so they finally placed the beds crosswise instead of lengthwise, as had been first suggested. My friend's reputation as a wonderful healer of the ills of the flesh accompanied him hither, if indeed it had not preceded him, and requests for medicine were soon sent in. Rheumatic plasters were given out until the whole company was adorned with them, the heads in some cases presenting a rather grotesque appearance. We laughed heartily at the ludicrous scene before us. A patient suffering from toothache was relieved by having the refractory molar extracted. This was the signal for trying the new remedy, and a number came forward to have their teeth drawn, showing a

childish curiosity to see what they looked like when they were out. The sub-chief improved the opportunity along with the others, but unfortunately his bit of ivory fell through a crack in the floor, and was lost.

As we could see very little of the country from our lodgings, the people asked us to go up the hill behind and look around, showing nothing of the Chinese suspicion of our designs on their "fung-shui," the influences of "wind and water" supposed to bring good or ill luck. They seemed to take a true delight in showing us their country, and would have led us anywhere we wished to go. The leeches, the sharp grass, and the slippery paths, soon checked all desire to see what was beyond, and made us content with studying the people in their homes. Our host brought out his family records, which consisted of a number of bamboo slips, with the name and date of birth, giving the year, month, day, and hour written in Chinese, of each member of his family, to the number of twelve or fifteen. The register of his mother, wife, and daughter was kept in the same way as that of the men. The younger son or nephew, I am not sure which, a boy of sixteen, seemed unusually bright and promising. My friend conceived a great liking for him, and tried to induce his father to let him accompany us to Koi-how. The boy would have consented gladly, and his father did not directly refuse, but said if my friend would return in a few months he would let him go. In almost every place the people seemed anxious to know when we would return, and expressed real pleasure at the prospect of seeing my friend again. The son of our host, who had the superintendence of the house, and his brother or

cousin, were made happy by the present of some books, in which we inscribed our names to their increased delight.

Our host killed a young pig, and insisted on presenting us with the best parts, and in addition to this would not be contented until we ate of his rice, refusing all pecuniary remuneration. We, of course, made full return for all his gifts, every little article we gave being received with unmistakable signs of appreciation. The empty tins were always in great demand, and we took care that those intended for our host were filled with salt, or something equally acceptable. The people seemed to have abundance of the necessities of life, although their rice and cornfields on the sides and tops of steep hills, must entail a great amount of hard labour. Several small but strongly-built granaries on the outskirts of the village afforded safe storage for their surplus grain. They rely chiefly on domestic animals for meat, as the supply of game is precarious, and this season seemed especially scarce. We heard francolin as we came along, and met a man with a superb silver pheasant, which we bought, but which died of fright before we reached the village.

Sunday was spent in this village, but while the people showed great respect for our religious exercises, we found it difficult to get them to understand their import. This arose, in a great measure, from our scanty knowledge of their language. They are free from many of the superstitions and idolatrous practices of the Chinese. Neither ancestral worship, nor geomancy (*fung-shui*), nor a State religion, stand in the way of a better system. Their gentleness, docility, and apparently impressionable nature would indicate a state of preparation for Christianity.

If by kindness and uniform justice their confidence were gained, the teaching of the missionary would no doubt meet with a most favourable reception. There seems to be no outward barrier to immediate and extensive work among them, if the men are found who are willing to undertake it. The widespread use of the Hainanese dialect adds greatly to the facilities for reaching them, where their native dialects vary to such an extent.

All the streams which we had hitherto crossed are tributary to the river that flows through the Ting-on district, and thence into the bay of Hoi-how, but we had now come to the mountain barrier that separates these from the streams that flow south. The massive hills that loomed up almost perpendicularly before us compose the "Shui-tau," "water-head" ridge, over which we must pass. We made preparation for a hard march. Our host seemed to feel it his duty to see that we were well supplied with men, and when no one else was available, he took one of the loads himself. The old Le, referred to previously, also took the burden of the cook, on whose feet the leeches had committed such ravages that he could scarcely walk. With these two Les, who knew the way perfectly, and the two from Loi-bán, who were still with us, we felt sure of crossing the ridge in safety.

As we left the village we took formal leave of the chief who had escorted us, by drinking a cup of chocolate with him, and crossing the little stream for almost the hundredth and last time, we struck a path up the steep and slippery hillside. For nearly a mile the way led through thick woods, with here and there a small field enclosed by a picket-fence. From those open spaces fine

views of the country, widening as we ascended, greeted us. White Stone Ridge stood out grandly about the valley, whose depths we knew, but whose heights were only now revealed to us. We saw how the little river was formed by several mountain brooks which rose high up the slopes, two of them forming fine cascades as they started down the mountain side, the nearer one falling in a broad sheet over a perpendicular wall seventy or eighty feet high, with a deep vine-covered ravine. We met with but few signs of life, a woodcock flying across the path, francolin crowing in the copse, and paroquets chattering overhead, were all that appeared. Emerging from this belt of woodland we came upon some rice fields, with little granaries five or six feet high built on the spot.

A rest and a smoke in a deserted hut, which gave shelter from the driving mist that gradually increased in chilliness as we ascended, prepared us for the heavy work which began as we entered the tall grass. The path from this point onward was very narrow, and completely overhung by jungle grass, in some places higher than our heads, and tangled across the road in a most annoying manner, the whole soaked and heavy with moisture. The bearers had to put forth double exertions to press the baskets through the over-hanging mass. The sharp grass, with edges like blades to cut the hands that pushed it back, and the ubiquitous leeches, added greatly to the general discomfort. This passage across the ridge was four miles or more in length, the highest point reached being about two thousand feet above the valley, and probably three thousand above the sea. All hope

or seeing the fine mountains beyond when we reached the top of the ridge, was blasted by the driving storms of mist, that shut out everything except the bleak sides of the Shui-t'au range near at hand, and occasional glimpses of the Put-pet Ridge, with its finely-wooded slopes running off at an angle to the south.

Difficult as the ascent had been, the descent on the other side was even worse, though not so long. The steep pathway, covered with a low arch of tangled grass above, and filled with reeking pitfalls below, made it not only disagreeable, but really dangerous. At the foot a brook of wonderfully clear water flowed in quiet contrast to the mud we had just waded through, and a short distance beyond it, over some marshy fields, stood the small village of Shui-ying, the first in the Le district of Ung-mau-t'ung, as it is called there. It contains but two houses, in one of which we found a place to rest until the bearers all came up nearly two hours later. Chilled by the dampness and dripping wet, we tried to kindle a fire with the green wood at our disposal, but failed. In one end of the house, which was old, dirty, and thatched with leaves of the fan palm, sat the mother with three or four naked children huddled over a small fire. The master soon returned, but being ignorant of Hainanese, and speaking a different Le dialect from that of those with us, we had some difficulty in communicating with him. The old Le, however, understood a little of the language of this district, and through him we put our questions.

After an hour's rest we continued our way over another ridge a mile and a half further to Ta-hún. This road

was "better, but much" obstructed by fallen trees and shrubs blown down by the late storms. All was wild and dreary-looking, except in some of the ravines, where fine tree-ferns were growing, with wild bananas and broad-leaved alpinias replacing the general waste of jungle grass. The Chinese explain Ta-hán by written characters, which mean "to strike cold," which, though of very doubtful accuracy, certainly seemed appropriate to us as we entered the place chilled and almost shivering from exposure to the cold mists. The town is on a hillside overlooking a fertile valley, and contains eight or ten houses, the largest and best being that of the headman, to which we were taken, and which is set highest on the hill, and built somewhat in Chinese style. Formerly the village contained forty houses, but a year ago it was burned by a band of robbers, New Hakkas and Les combined, who swept the whole valley, burning houses and driving off cattle. Our host showed us the hatchet marks on his door which they tried to break open, and pointed dolefully to the little flock of goats, which were all that were left of large herds, seventy head of large cattle having been driven off at the same time.

The people here belong to the tribe called the Kon-keuk (Dog Feet) Les, and speak a dialect so different from that across the ridge that our Le bearers had to converse with them in Hainanese in order to be understood. Our host, and several others who are accustomed to go among the Chinese on business, one of them having just returned from Hoi-how, were dressed in Chinese clothes, but most of the men wore a more primitive dress, if dress it could

be called, while the women were clad in the same way as those in the last village, most of them not being tattooed at all. Some of them were very large and stout, and all wore circlets of beads, bought from the Chinese, in some instances twenty-five around one neck; large silver earrings were also conspicuous on several of them. At this place I succeeded in getting some specimens of their clothes, although they were loth to part with them. In no other place had we seen so many boys, fine, healthy youngsters that promised to equal their elders, many of whom were above the ordinary stature. The houses were poor in consequence of the recent disaster, and were thatched with leaves of the fan-palm, which grows in abundance half-a-day's journey from the place. Rattan in considerable quantities is gathered from the wooded hills near by, and taken to the market at Ling-mun, two days' journey out.

Our host was generous in his hospitality, bringing in a large supply of rice when we arrived, adding eggs and other articles afterwards, and refusing payment for the things. When we were ready to start the next day several men offered to carry our baggage gratuitously to the next village, and two of them voluntarily acted as guides over the mountain road. The way led through one of the most charming bits of scenery one can imagine, following the course of the mountain brook, which became a rushing torrent, in places making us thankful for the help of our guides in selecting the shallower and less rapid places for crossing. It was a broad and finely-shaded road in places, a rich and varied forest growth lining it on either side, with large trees

covered to their tops with vines and ferns, and quantities of most delicate ferns and club-mosses, chiefly *Lycopodium caudatum*, forming a rich green carpet over the rough banks. Our guides were full of the raid made last year, and showed us where they had barricaded this road, and after firing upon their assailants had fled by another steep and intricate path known only to themselves, thus saving their lives, but leaving their houses to be pillaged. The stream bursts through a narrow rock-bound gorge, along which it is impossible to travel, before it falls in a steep descent into the valley beyond.

We ascended gradually through several miles of cool woods that cover the shoulder of the hill to the left. The farther side of the hill we found to be bare and frightfully steep. As we emerged from the trees we reached the best point from which to view the great Five Finger Mountain; but, alas! the mist was too thick to give us even the faintest inkling of its outline, so we had to be content with the half-understood description of the Les, who pointed out the situation of the five peaks that compass it, and to take their word for it that the middle and highest peak was struck by lightning not long ago, and so shattered as to destroy its striking outline. The massive sides, to a height of about three thousand feet, were plainly seen covered with trees. Looking at it from the south-west, the direction of our route to Ling-shui was pointed out a little to the left of the great hill, through a wide pass or rather rough elevated plain, showing us that no such hard climbing as we had done would be required. The turbulent stream to our right joins a river a short distance below, which

flows out to the sea in the Kom-yan district, and several miles beyond, flowing also from the great hill. Another stream is seen which flows down to Ngai-chow. It was with no little satisfaction that we looked through this extensive view of the land yet before us, being assured that three days more would bring us to the headwaters of the Ling-shui stream at the town of Pó-teng.

From this point we looked into the heart of the Le country—a country of rich valleys and fertile plains, high mountains and romantic scenery, well adapted to grazing, and capable of supporting a population many times larger than that in the scattered villages now seen. The descent of this hill was very trying, the path in places leading down the sheer steep. We reached the foot without any mishap, which is more than our bearers could say, and passing through another belt of woodland, where noisy paroquets chattered above us, and a monkey fled in dismay along the branches of a large oak tree, we came to the town of Nga-hán, on the banks of the larger stream. Our old Le bearer, who was the one habitual opium smoker we met on the other side of the ridge, took us to the house of a Chinaman, for our greater comfort he said, but to facilitate his getting a little opium for himself we believed. Our coming to this house was the beginning of disaster. It was our intention to stop for a short rest only, and then push on to the chief's village, three miles beyond, whence we purposed to go by easy stages to the Ling-shui side.

Our first employment as we sat down was to get rid of the leeches, which were more abundant this day than ever. From my feet and legs I picked off nearly forty

of all sizes, the Chinaman's Le wife bringing hot coals to destroy them, and exclaiming in astonishment at the great number. As we prepared to start the Chinaman, who was exceedingly polite, came with a written request for us to remain with him until the next day. As we insisted on going he told us the stream was impassable, being at least eight feet deep at the crossing, but that the water would subside in the night, and he took us down to the bank to prove that he was not deceiving us. Our detention seemed inevitable, so we prepared to make the best of it by examining the town. Before us, in the centre of the village, stood a fine tamarind tree. The houses were built along a kind of street, with a dozen or more granaries on the outskirts. A second village stood a few rods away, the two combined having about forty houses.

Our host was evidently a man of influence, not only in the village, but in the whole district. He had been there for twenty years, had a Le wife and several children, but did not seem to have instructed them very thoroughly in the rules of propriety, his wife going about most of the time without a jacket, showing a lack of modesty we had not seen in any of the villages passed. His house was the largest in the town, but being built in Chinese style, with mud walls and earthen floor, was not so comfortable as the usual Le structures. We also missed the ready provision of bamboos for our beds, having to select for ourselves from a collection of long crooked poles that proved very unsatisfactory. Wild pig and venison were brought us. The former was much too high to suit our taste, but the latter proved to be excellent.

During the evening, it was evident that our Chinese bearers were on the verge of mutiny, being frightened by the stories of robbers infesting the way over the great hill, which our host and other Chinamen living in the village had told them. To make matters worse, a quarrel broke out between our Le bearers and the Chinese on account of their food. We tried to treat matters lightly, but feared some serious trouble was brewing, especially when our host united with the others in urging us to give up the plan of crossing the hills, and take the nearest way out to Ling-mun. We feared our host was working against us in an under-handed way, which suspicion was fully confirmed afterwards.

When we started the next morning they led us up the stream to a shallow ford, where the water was only waist deep, which could have been crossed as easily the day before. We waded this large stream four times, and passed three villages before reaching the residence of the chief. His town had suffered severely from the robbers, no good houses being left. There were several brick and stone structures, very damp and musty, built after the Chinese pattern, the people probably being led to adopt such form and material in hope of being more secure against attacks, sacrificing health and comfort to gain a doubtful advantage. Our worst fears were realised, as the chief informed us that no men were to be had in his village, and that he could do nothing to help us forward. Our Le bearers were only engaged to this point, and, with the exception of the old man, were not willing to go farther, while our Chinese were in a mutinous frame of mind, and even if they had been

willing, were not sufficient to take us through. It took but a few moments to see that our case was hopeless, and that there was nothing for us to do but to yield to the inevitable.

There being no accommodation in the chief's village, we retraced our steps, recrossing the broad stream three times, and put up for the night at a small village we had passed in the morning, resisting all efforts of the Chinaman, who had followed us, to take us back to his house.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VALLEYS AND STREAMS OF THE LE MOTHER RIDGE.



HAVING made the mistake of stopping at a Chinaman's house, instead of following our usual custom of accepting the more cordial hospitality of the Les, we were involved in difficulties which forced us to abandon our purpose of crossing the great mountains, through the heart of the wild country, to the opposite side of the island. The disappointment experienced in having to turn back when a few days would have seen us across the hills, was made the more keen by the feeling which soon grew from suspicion to certainty, that we had been made the victims of the Chinaman's chicanery. One by one the steps of his deceit were revealed when it was too late for us to counteract his designs. Our detention at his house, accomplished by false statements as to the depth of the stream we had to cross, gave him time to send word to the Le chief in advance of us, and warn him not to assist us in any way. The tales of robbers and hostile natives infesting the road, which so thoroughly frightened our bearers, and were made credible by the depredations of the previous year, had no foundation in

fact. The difficulties of travelling could not have been great, since the man himself, who was weak physically, had twice made the journey. The fact that a small war was then going on some distance further south, which drew most of the wild and restless bands from this vicinity, made it even more safe to cross than usual. What motive, then, had the man for interfering with us? Besides his jealousy of our friendly reception by the Les, and his desire to show his influence by defeating our hopes of assistance from the chief, we learned that the reason given was that we had come to spy out the treasures of the Great Hill, and that the precious metals supposed to exist there would certainly be discovered if we were allowed to cross the mountains. The Les would never have thought of this had not the Chinaman, with the absurd belief which seems inborn in the whole nation, that the white people of western lands have supernatural powers of detecting the hidden treasures of the earth, persuaded him that we had hostile designs on the mineral wealth of his grand old hills.

On our journey out we made constant inquiries of all whom we met as to the presence of robbers, and were always assured that this year there had been no trouble, and that the passage across the hills was as safe as that over any part of the Le country.

Our experience, though sufficiently disagreeable to us, may be of benefit to any who in the future seek to accomplish that in which we failed. My advice to all who travel among the Les is, to avoid, as far as possible, all dealings with the Chinese who live among them.

By relying in any measure upon them, one not only exposes himself directly to their underhand and sinister designs, but loses the cordial hospitality and kind, spontaneous help which the Les seem ever ready to give to those who come as their guests.

After a most trying day we came to the little village at which we had paused to rest on the way up. It was still several hours before sunset, and we wished to push on to another town ten miles further, but some of our men were lame, the Les were refractory, and insisted on stopping, while the son of the house in which we were resting came with an invitation, which one of the Chinamen had written for him, begging us to accept his hospitality for the night. We consented, after receiving a promise from all that they would make an early start in the morning.

The project of crossing the hills being now given up, our desire was to take the easiest and most direct route back to the Chinese territory, and make as extensive a *détour* as possible through the populous district in the north-east part of the island. The chief followed us to the village of his own accord. He was well dressed in Chinese clothes of a good quality, was rather tall and respectable in appearance, but seemed very weak, showing but little power of control over his people, and evidently standing in fear of the Chinamen, who taught him what words to say to us. I spent the afternoon in walking over the wooded hill behind the village, where, along the paths ploughed into deep holes by the feet of the buffaloes, were many attractive plants. The moist and mossy trunks of many of the trees were covered with

delicate ferns. Several rugged cocoa-nut stocks, young ones of great circumference, whose stiff and ragged leaves, full fifteen feet long, started almost from the ground, were bedecked with half-a-dozen beautiful species, growing in the leaf-mould that filled the spaces betwixt the ponderous leaves. On every side rose the endless variety of mountain peaks and ranges that surrounded and intersected the valley of Ung-mau (Hung-Mo). Below stood the village half in ruins, the charred remains of houses showing the devastation wrought by the marauders a year before; the meagre herd of cattle, reduced from one hundred to ten, betrayed the greatest loss of all, while handlooms and other domestic and farming implements stolen added to the general loss and discomfort.

Towards evening the women began to gather in from the rice field, where we had seen them, sickle in hand, knee deep in the mud and water with their burdens of damp grain. These heavy sheaves being disposed of in bamboo trays over the fires, they proceeded to carry water for the family and their guests up the steep and slippery hillside. The vessels used were made of the hollow bamboo culms, cut the length of the joints, each holding about a gallon of water. Three of these tied together were suspended on each end of the carrying pole, taking the place of the usual earthen jar. These women were strong and healthy in appearance, with pleasant, smiling faces, without a trace of tattoo, their chief ornament being large circlets of beads. Inside the house, suspended from the rafter, and arranged on temporary supports over the beams, were stores of grain in

sheaf, some with a peculiar glistening reddish beard, that gave it a beautiful and rich appearance. No trouble was experienced in getting suitable bamboos for our cots, each member of the household showing a desire to help us as far as possible, watching every movement with intense but respectful interest, until we bade them put out the lights, and restrain their tongues so that we might sleep.

The morning dawned bright and promising, the first clear day we had seen for two weeks, and we were in high hopes of seeing the great mountain before leaving the district. Our way, as we departed, led to the north over a low hill at the back of the village, and thence through a rolling plain, with a small village on the higher ground to our right. Beyond this plain we ascended the gradual slope of a grassy ridge. To the left of us rose the massive barrier of Hang-kwong ridge, several thousand feet high, thickly wooded over most of its surface, and strongly marked in its individual features. This and the adjoining ridge of equal height, divided from each other by a deep gorge, presented a fine succession of inspiring views, the lower portions showing many open tracts of pasture land, while thick groves of noble trees cast deep shadows above. To the south the clouds broke away entirely, and showed a long vista of mountains and plains stretching out as far as the eye could reach. The Five-Finger Mountain, however, was still covered with mist. Long and wistfully we looked for the clouds to rise. We stood on the ridge as long as time would permit, reluctant to descend on the other side without the longed-for vision in full length of his majesty the

mountain king of Hainan. Four thousand feet of his great sides were open to us, but the upper half we never saw, except in one distant view from Nam-fung.

Near the top of this grassy ridge we met a veritable son of the soil, whose smiling face, covered with a heavy beard, showed much good nature. His obliging disposition was immediately put to the test by a request from our old Le guide to relieve him of his load as far as the next village, about two miles beyond, to which request he yielded without demur. Our way from the top of this ridge lay down an easy slope between grass-grown hills along the course of a little stream to the village of Viabau, where we stopped for our noon-day rest. The houses were mostly closed, and the people absent in the fields. We found one door open, and entered the house without invitation. The host soon appeared and made us welcome, notwithstanding the scowls of a wretched-looking Chinaman, who was going through his slovenly toilet in a most lazy manner, chewing bits of a raw opium shell in the intervals of his movements, which he shared in a niggardly way with the Le. A few neighbours gathered in, and we could not help noticing the contrast they presented to the bright, robust, and energetic men we had seen in the district behind us.

In this section, where they have constant intercourse with the Chinese, they seem to have greatly deteriorated from their original manliness and physical strength, if we grant, as seems only reasonable, that they were formerly on a level with their neighbours to the south in these respects. Opium is the direct cause of this

deterioration, as it is the curse of all the Chinese who penetrate their country, and use it as an antidote for the inevitable ennui into which their lack of resources is sure to plunge them, as much as for protection against malaria.

Leaving the village of Viaban, we entered a country of magnificent scenery. On our left rose the cloud-covered heights of the Le Mother range, only inferior in loftiness and dignity to the Five-Finger peak we had left behind on the other side. On its lower slopes were many cultivated fields, while above the forest still claimed the greater part. Many fine ravines and wild gorges cut deep inroads into the sides, and down the steep, rock-encumbered courses poured tumultuous cataracts. Several streams of considerable size take their rise in living fountains in this mountain ridge, one of them coming in a broad volume from the upper slopes, and plunging in a magnificent cataract, several hundred feet in one grand leap, into the rocky chasm, with a roar of thunder that echoes far and wide among the mountains. Time did not permit a near examination of this wonderful cataract; but a mile or so below it, we had to cross the stream that flows from it, which was about thirty yards wide, and nearly waist-deep, flowing in a swift, cold current, telling us what a volume of water must come over that precipice, which seemed from the point we viewed it to be not less than five hundred feet high. This stream joins the main one, along whose course lay our uneven path, and which we had to cross six times in the course of this day, each time finding it broader and deeper, as it received the numerous tributaries from

either side that added their sparkling torrents to swell this main artery. We learned, as we advanced, that we were on the headwaters of the Ka-shik river, one of the large streams that flow from the central hills toward the north-east.

To our right, and facing the Le Mother for some distance, appeared a most attractive ridge, called, if I mistake not, the Miu-ling, rising to a height of three thousand feet, and extending ten miles or more along the river. It was completely covered from base to summit with heavy forest, whose virgin growth spread over the broad sides in infinite variety of form and colour. These pristine depths of semi-tropical woodlands seemed almost unbroken, and we could imagine all varieties of plant and animal life flourishing undisturbed in the deep recesses of its thickly-covered sides. Along the banks of the stream, and in many places covering the sandy islets that rose in its very bed, were large numbers of a new species of oak (*Quercus naiadurum*), here discovered for the first time. Some of these were large handsome trees, with wide-spreading branches, adorned with narrow, acuminate leaves. Many of the larger trees were thickly covered with blossoms that exhaled a heavy fragrance, while others still held their last crop of acorns, strewing the bed of the streams with glistening nuts to tempt the bears and wild pigs. The passage of the stream in several places was very difficult, the slippery boulders in the rushing torrent affording but precarious footing for the burden-bearers. In some places the little river flowed in a bed of granite, with scarcely room for a foothold on the smooth rocks that rose directly from the water.

The rugged rocks, the swift clear river, the loud music of the dashing waters that drowned our human voices, the roar of the great cataract, formed a grand, harmonious accompaniment to the striking panorama that passed in vivid pictures before our eyes in that march down the upper valley of the Ka-chik stream.

After many ascents and descents, we began a long but easy incline leading up one of the lower hills, thrown out somewhat terrace-like in shape from the base of the great Le Mother ridge. The path was lined with boulders in peculiar forms, some immense black ones being round in shape and as large as a house. This projecting line of the foundations of the higher peaks above was almost bare of trees, giving us unobscured views of the pathless wild across the river to the right. Several villages were seen at short distances back from the river, with some good fields attached; but most of the valley was a wild, impassable jungle. At one of the fords we met a party of Les, who were disconsolate over the loss of a deer they had caught in the morning, and allowed in some way to escape.

Keeping close to the old Le, who acted as guide, and who seemed in great haste to reach a lodging place, I came to the village of Shui-kwai an hour before dark. In spite of previous instructions, he took me to a Chinese house, where opium-smoking was the order of the day, the attractions of the pipe being too powerful for him to resist. I refused to enter, telling him he must find a place for us in a Le house, which he did, and soon conducted me to the highest house in the town, where the usual cordial welcome was given. Just before entering

the town we crossed a noisy brook, that came tumbling down a steep and picturesque ravine. The fine trees overhanging it, the clear pools and eddies, the great rocks that filled its course, and sent the water swirling and dashing in little cascades, drew me irresistibly to its side as soon as the baggage was deposited in the house. A rude causeway of boulders served as a bridge. On this I sat listening to the noisy torrent, and waited for my friend, with the remainder of our company, to arrive. He soon came with but one bearer, saying the others were still far behind, and he feared might lose the way.

We waited until it was dark, and then started back to find them. After going some distance without hearing them, or receiving any answer to our shouts, we returned to the village, where the offer of a little salt and tobacco secured the services of four Lés, who set out immediately in search of the missing ones, two going back by the way we came, and two going to a small hamlet nearer the river, whose light might have led them astray. The two former found them a mile in the rear, on the hill beside the main path, preparing to encamp for the night. They took the search party for robbers, and made some hostile demonstrations, but were soon assured of their friendly intentions. It appeared that one of the coolies, the only opium-smoker among them, had kept the party back until they had lost sight of those in advance, and that finally he laid down in exhaustion, saying he could go no further. The dumb man took his load in addition to his own, but soon found the double burden too heavy. Although the road was still plain it was becoming dark, and with the exhausted coolie, whose evil habit caused

the trouble, and his load, which no one felt able to carry, they concluded to stop. Instead of sending one of their number (there were seven of them) ahead to find out where we were, the selfish fellows, having all the provisions and bedding with them, were preparing to make themselves comfortable for the night, and leave us to fare as best we could without food or covering. They were beginning to cook their rice when the Les came upon them, and brought them into the village. It was rather a long fast for us, having had breakfast at half-past six in the morning, and taken only a cup of chocolate and a biscuit at noon, to be kept until ten o'clock at night for our dinner, after twenty-five miles of very rough travelling.

This village, which was the last Le settlement we visited, is picturesquely situated at the foot of the Le Mother ridge, and by the side of the ravine with its dashing brook, with the river flowing a short distance below. Behind it rises a lofty and peculiarly pointed peak, that can be descried from a great distance, making it an excellent landmark. All day the fleecy veil of clouds hung over the brow of the Le Mother, and it was not until three days later, when quite outside the Le country, that we saw the noble form of this fine range without the clouds to obscure. It is difficult to give even an approximately correct estimate with the eye. I would, however, place the height of this mountain at about 5,500 feet, and comparing their height as seen in the one distant view, would add 1,000 more to the Five-Finger peaks. While the Le Mother stood clear of clouds, the great fingers, whose jewelled tips the native poet praises, still clasped the misty drapery of the clouds, which con-

ceased their outline. The fatigue and hardships of our journey were telling severely on the Chinese members of our party, several of whom were unequal to the task of carrying, so that fresh bearers had to be engaged. The obligation of the Le host to provide for the wants of his guests and help them on their way was again proved, when our host himself took one of the loads, and became our guide through the intricate paths to the town of Ling-mün.

The chief interest of this day's travel was in the retrospective views of the hills obtained, with ever-varying scenes from each elevation attained. We passed over many grassy hills, covered with groves of liquid-amber trees. Jungle fowl flew up in places, and flocks of paroquets chattered overhead. Along the way lay several small hamlets, half Chinese, half Le, wretched little hovels on the bare hillsides. The rocky path of the previous day was exchanged for one of mud. Several streams were crossed before we reached the first Chinese town, where we stopped at noon, and first began to miss the cordial hospitality of the Les. Our attention was called to the whole skeleton of a large deer, bones, sinews, antlers, all complete, and offered to us at an exorbitant price. To add to our other discomforts, it began to rain heavily soon after midday, making the roads already bad tenfold worse. The mud was knee deep in places, and occasionally one's shoe would remain behind when the foot was drawn out of the adhesive slough. An unsuspected stick or stone in the reeking moss would sometimes bring one into a sitting posture, giving only too evident proof to all beholders as to the

nature of the place we sat in, and making us glad of a pretext to wade through the deepest part of the next stream we had to cross. The mud was simply incredible; it seemed both endless and bottomless.

After alternately wading through such reeking paths, and washing the roughest off in the next brook crossed, we came in sight of the town of Ling-mun. It was raining in torrents, and we had just light enough to cross safely a narrow stone bridge made over the upper verge of a waterfall, about twelve feet high, where a false step would have sent us down the slippery rocks into a deep pool below, before entering the gates of the town. As we walked up the dripping street, inquiring at every few doors for lodging, and being referred to places at the other end of the town, we remarked, "What a contrast to our reception among the Les!" Having traversed nearly the whole length of the market-place, we were beginning to despair of finding a room, when a man directed my friend to a house near by, which he said was an inn, and we entered immediately. The landlady came forward with every sign of disapproval, and told us there was neither food, bedding, nor room for us. My friend informed her that this, being an inn, was for the accommodation of strangers, and that we should remain until better quarters were found. Seeing we were determined to stay, they sent out to inquire for rooms elsewhere, and soon came back with the information that a few doors beyond, on the opposite side of the street, we could find good accommodation. Leaving our baggage and the bearers to hold the place we were in, we went to see the place recommended, and, finding it satisfactory,

transferred our soaked baskets and bundles, with our drenched and wearied bodies, to its more hospitable shelter. We found a comparatively dry place to sleep in, in a sort of cock-loft built over one side of the main room.

Having reached this point, where our direct intercourse with the Les ceased, it may not be amiss to conclude our account with some general remarks about their country.

Ling-mun, literally "the gate of the mountains," is, as the name indicates, the entrance to the central mountain regions, and is by far the most convenient point to enter the Le country for those who start from Hoi-how. Two days of comparatively easy travel (if the weather be clear), through a most attractive region, would bring one to the chief's village in Ung-mun, from which we turned back. From that point across the Five-Finger Mountain to Ling-shui, or directly south to Ny-chow, is a matter of a few days' further travel, if one is provided with the necessary guide and bearers. Kindness and tact are the chief qualities needed, to secure a friendly reception with the Les.

By travelling leisurely from village to village, there would probably be no difficulty in getting them to act as bearers, but for hurried marches and long journeys they are not to be depended upon. No anxiety need be felt as to lodgings and food, as their inborn hospitality is sure to provide these. A supply of silk thread of various colours, embroidered purses and tobacco pouches, beads, needles, and any small useful articles, would, in many cases, be more serviceable than money. In en-

gaging bearers, not more than thirty-five or forty catties can be assigned to each, owing to the nature of the roads to be travelled.

The Les, occupying almost the entire central and southern portions of the island, are found within the geographical limits of eleven of the thirteen districts into which the Chinese have divided the country. In speaking of this the Chinese use the couplet,—

“Wan-chang has no Le,
While Ting-fu has no sea,”

the latter being the only inland district in the prefecture of Kiung-chow.

The Les, as far as I could learn, seem to be divided into fifteen or sixteen tribes, which are known under distinct names, and differ more or less in dress, language, and customs, but all evidently belong to one homogeneous race, bound together by common ties, and, as a rule, living on friendly terms with each other. They are probably of Malay origin, a hint of this being found in their name, which is variously pronounced *le*, *lai*, *lay*, *loy*, etc., and in one place at least *moi*. They add a labial when speaking of themselves, and say *b'lai*, *b'lay*, etc.; if the *b* were interchanged with *m* we should have *m'li* and *m'lay*, which is near enough to *Malaŷa* to suggest some connection. The various Chinese characters used from time to time, show that it is simply the sound for the name by which they designate themselves that is given.

Their attitude towards the Chinese has ever been that of an independent people defending themselves against

oppressors who would reduce them to bondage. The charge of timidity and cowardice, which the Chinese invariably bring against them, can hardly be sustained, and might, in many cases, be applied to the Chinese themselves. Wars have been frequent, and, owing to the utter lack of justice manifested by the Chinese in their treatment of them, no permanent peace is likely to be secured. The methods of warfare in these ever-recurring outbreaks are peculiar. The Les, armed chiefly with bows and spears, are no match, in an open field, for the Chinese with rifles and cannon; so they conceal themselves in the jungle, and make sudden raids, retreating before the enemy can retaliate. The Chinese, on the other hand, with all their arms, are helpless in the face of a pathless jungle, into which they are afraid to venture, lest malaria prostrate them, or an ambush of the enemy entangle them.

In the spring of 1882 there was an outbreak of the mountain Les on the south of the island, near Sam-a. A Brigadier-General, with an army, was sent to quell the disturbance, but found himself in a low, malarious district, where his soldiers sickened and died, while the enemy, safe in their impenetrable jungle, defied him. With more conscience than usually belongs to his class, he disdained all subterfuges, and, as a consequence, months passed, and no results appeared, except the constant diminution of his little army by sickness and desertion. For this want of success he was degraded from his office, and sent into retirement near the scene of his failure. In his place a Tao-tai was sent to command the expedition. He at once began a system

of bribery and deception, and in the end succeeded in inducing the Le chief, who headed the hostile tribes, to visit his camp to arrange terms of peace. To accomplish this, besides presents of money and promises of security, the Tao-tai sent four common soldiers as hostages, assuring the chief that two of these were his own younger brothers and the other two mandarins. No sooner was the Le chief within his power, than he was put in irons, sent on board a gunboat, and carried up to Canton, where he was soon after executed. And what became of the four hostages? The Les, aroused to fury by the treachery practised upon them, wreaked their vengeance in a fearful manner on these hapless victims, flaying them alive, it is said, to appease the wrath of the people. Such occurrences are not likely to promote friendly relations between the two races.

It speaks much for the natural friendliness and forbearance of the Les, that, in spite of such experiences, they permit the Chinese to travel and trade unmolested through their country to such an extent. We saw the last of these peculiar people at Ling-mun, where they were conspicuous by their unshaved heads, unkempt hair, and curious dress as they wandered up and down the market making small purchases. One of them, a stout young fellow with a pleasing face, but very scanty raiment, carried water for the hostess at our inn.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RETURN TO HOI-HOW.



THE heavy rain of the previous day had, in spite of oil-cloth coverings, soaked through our baskets, so that a general opening out and drying of our travelling gear was necessary. Clothing, bedding, provisions, dried plants, were all saturated, but with the assistance of the sun, who finally made his appearance, and several charcoal furnaces, we contrived to stay, in a measure, the ravages of dampness and mould. While busy rearranging our possessions one of the beaters came in, saying a band of robbers was coming to attack the town. Half paralysed with fear, his yellow face had turned to a pale green hue, giving ghastly emphasis to his words as he urged us to fly instantly. In a few moments the town gates were shut, and all the houses closed, many of the people hastily gathering a few necessaries into a bundle, and leaving the place, preferring, they said, to give the robbers full sway over what they were sure to get in the end, rather than incur personal injury in defence of it.

I went out to offer our services to the commander of

the military forces, my friend continuing to arrange his medicines meanwhile. Presently arms were distributed for our use, as well as for others in the place, and the guard of a dozen soldiers sent out to meet the supposed assailants. After a time the reports gradually assumed a more credible shape. At first it was a band of several thousand strong that was seen, composed of L'es and New Hakkas. Soon it was reduced to as many hundreds, and then to as many tens. The report of rifles announced their approach, and as the soldiers returned, the true state of affairs became known.

Five poor fellows, said to be New Hakkas, had gone to the village of Pak-ling, several miles distant. The people, because of some old offence, suspected them of evil intentions, and drove them out, several hundreds of the villagers joining in the chase of the so-called robbers, who fled to the market town for safety. It was the sight of these five unarmed men, pursued by the incensed villagers, that had thrown the town into such consternation. The soldiers, without waiting to inquire into the cause of their coming, fired on them as they approached, killing three outright and wounding the other two, who died soon after in the market-place. For this unnecessary barbarity, the petty commander of the post would probably receive commendation, and perhaps promotion, whereas if the poor fellows could have told their own story, they might have appeared more entitled to protection than punishment.

The town of Ling-mun is one of the chief tracts for Le goods, which come out in small quantities from the districts south and east. There is one long street, with some fairly good shops on either side, and wooden sheds

in the centre, where hucksters keep their stalls on market days, and supply the people with all varieties of small goods. Medicines, fragrant woods, rattans, deers' horns, and sinews, dried mushrooms, and large quantities of bones for fertilising purposes, go to make up the trade. In one shop we were shown a large snake of the species *Python molurus* (L.). It was fifteen feet long and eighty pounds in weight. It had been caught in the Le village of Shap-man-tung, thirty miles south-east, and brought out for sale. It was the first of these reptiles I had seen, although they are said to be numerous in the hills, and I congratulated myself that I had not formed its acquaintance when it was suspended from the branches of some of the large trees in the woodlands we had passed through. Many larger than this one have been captured, some reaching the great length of twenty-seven feet, with bulk of body to correspond. The natives do not fear them much, and they seem to be comparatively harmless creatures, feeding on the smaller animals. Their chief value is in the skin, which is dried, and used among other things to cover the hollow wooden frame or drum of certain kinds of guitars. The flesh and oil derived from the fat is used for medicine. I had often heard the Chinese use the expression—

“South of the sea (Hainan) great snakes are found,
North of the sea (Mainland) tigers abound.”

The Chinese called this the Nam-she, “Southern Snake,” and offered it to us for ten dollars, which we afterwards learned was probably ten times the price they were likely to get for it.

At Ling-mun, and onward, we saw groves of the areca or betel-nut palm, the long slender trunks, white and slightly corrugated, looking like pipe-stems, surmounted by a tuft of broad leaves, extending almost horizontally from the trunk. Below the leaves hung clusters of green nuts, yielding that useless commodity, of which the Hainan variety is said to be of superior quality, because of its peculiarly aromatic flavour. The trunks of these trees are used to some extent in building, as pillars and supports for light structures. The petioles of the leaves, which are strong and elastic, and from one and a half to two feet in length, are used in making a cheap kind of overshoes, also cups, ladles, and other utensils in common use. A grove of these trees, with their slender white stems crowned with glistening green crests, creepers twining gracefully around their trunks, and in places neat ferns encircling them at intervals, like living turrets, forms a most attractive feature in the landscape.

In a village near Ling-mun the Roman Catholics have a chapel, but what success they have met with, or how they are regarded by the people we could not ascertain. Ascending the bare but massive hill to the south-east, we were greeted with the best views of the country yet obtained. We could trace the way we had come almost back to the first high ridge crossed, and see paths leading over the nearer hills into the unexplored mountain ranges that extend into the Manchow district. Many of the ridges seen to the east and south were densely wooded, lofty, rugged, and difficult of access. Far away to the south-west we could still see the dome-like top of Sha-mo-ling. The country around was thickly dotted

with villages. To the east lay a broad plain, hemmed in by mountains on the south and east, leaving an open passage to the north, through which the road leads to Hoi-how. The plain has many villages, but only a portion of the land is under cultivation, the greater part being divided between pasture fields and groves of trees.

After two days and a half of rest, we continued our journey over this plain, going directly towards the high range to the east. Many people, carrying baskets of bones, accompanied us. The care with which these bones are collected, and the distance they are carried, show how great is the demand for fertilisers, in what seems to be a rich and only half-cultivated country. Ten miles' travel through this rolling plain brought us to the market-town of All-pó. The market was over for the day, but crowds of people soon gathered about us. The inns were mostly full, there being an unusually large number of men carrying grain and merchandise at this time. We found space to stow ourselves in a small house, whose lack of doors was appreciated by the curious crowd more than by us. The hostess, bent on being agreeable, placed the only private room in the house at our disposal. She spoke Cantonese, and boasted that she was the only person in the town who possessed this accomplishment. In this, however, she was mistaken, as several others addressed me in the same dialect during the evening.

The next day proved a toilsome one. The way over the plain was pleasant, in many places leading through delightful groves beside attractive plantations of aacré palms; in other places arched over with evergreen

canopies, cool and picturesque. Among other floral attractions were seen camellia trees twenty-five feet high, with trunks a foot or more in diameter, and one whole symmetrical tree covered with a profusion of white flowers. The ascent of the ridge was hot and tiring, but from the top the landscape spread before us drove away all thoughts of fatigue. Behind us lay the plain with the higher mountains beyond; to the south-east stretched in green and wooded beauty a lofty range called Ying-mo ridge; to the east lay the wooded slopes and valleys into which we were about to descend. From this point onward for miles our way lay through delightful woodlands. Hill after hill appeared as we advanced, clothed in the garments nature had originally provided. Some from which the higher trees had been cut were covered with a thick growth of broad-leaved shrubs very ornamental in appearance. Among the undergrowth that covered the hillsides were several varieties of rattan, some slender and trailing, some fine and upright, bristling with their myriad thorns as if in defiance of the hands that would cut and carry them off. Notwithstanding their thorny armour we provided ourselves with some good specimens as mementoes of this Hainan forest.

In the midst of these hills we rested at midday in a little hamlet, the walls of whose houses were all made of the split trunks of the areca palm. Over-ripe cocoa-nuts were offered us, but only sparingly tasted. As we proceeded the path wound through marshy valleys and over wooded hills, lined in places by great trees, whose straight and massive trunks rose sixty and seventy feet above us. Men were seen cutting the leaves of a small

species of palm that grew profusely on the hills, and pressing them into bales to be carried out and sold for thatching houses. Near the path the rattans were mostly cut away, but further up the slopes they still trailed in plenty over the trees. Many carriers with goods from Ka-chik were met, this being the direct road from that mart into the interior. At 4 P.M. we reached the town of Shun-fai, the end of our foot journey for that day, and prepared to embark in the little boats that in one night would take us to Ka-chik, and enable us to avoid the two days' hard travel by a rough mountain road which the overland route would involve.

The stream we came upon at this point was the same we had crossed so many times in its upper course. While we had gone to Ling-mun, it had forced its way through a wild and picturesque country to the east of our route, and now greeted us with the dignity of a river, bearing on its swift surface the boats and merchandise of the busy mart thirty miles below. The boat in which we embarked was about twenty feet long and three feet wide, and scarcely high enough to allow one to sit erect. Into this space was packed our baggage and six attendants, leaving us scarcely room to move an inch when all was packed away. The swift current bore us rapidly down. Rocky precipices, tree-covered slopes, distant views of mountains aglow with the sunset light, deer standing on exposed points, rapids, cataracts, passed quickly before us ere the sudden fall of night shut out the world around. We spent a wretched night, in which sleep came but fitfully amid the manifold discomforts. The chill night wind blew through the open boat, and miasmatic vapours

rose from the water to envelop us and lay the seeds of fever in our wearied bodies, too much exhausted to resist such influences.

Morning found us at anchor off the town of Ka-chik. Our walk to the inn, nearly a mile distant, gave us some idea of the dimensions of the town, which, if not equal to, is second only to Hoi-how in size and importance. Two main streets at right angles to each other, like the letter T, contain the principal shops. Many side streets run off from these with open spaces for the use of itinerant merchants on market days. The attendance at market is immense, thousands of people crowding every nook and corner, bringing every imaginable kind of merchandise for sale, from the squirrels, paroquets, and rattans of their native hills, to matches, cheap scents, and other gim-cracks from the far west. The necessities of life seemed remarkably cheap. Fresh eggs were sold at four cash each, large luscious bananas at three cash for two, coconuts for six cash each; ducks for four cents a pound, fresh beef and other things in proportion. I devoted the day to traversing the streets with books, and disposed of our whole remaining supply, some three hundred copies, without the least difficulty.

As a centre of trade and influence this town is very important. It is half-a-day's journey from the sea, and three days from Hoi-how. The most of the business is, as usual, in the hands of the Cantonese, two of the largest and most conspicuous buildings in the place being the guildhalls, bearing the names Nam-shun-ui-kun, and Tung-san-ui-kun, the Nin-hoi and the Shun-tak near this uniting, while those from Tung-kun and

Sai-ui do the same. The insolence so characteristic of the Cantonese was not lacking here. The annoying epithets, unheard in all the country where we met, only Les and Hainanese, here greeted us with unpleasant frequency through the day. Our reception, on the whole, was gratifying, and promises well for the friendliness of the people in future intercourse with the stranger from other lands.

The town is surrounded by broad plains which yield abundance of rice, cocoa-nut trees appear in increasing numbers, giving a tropical aspect to the landscape. Toward the sea they become still more abundant, until they occupy most of the land capable of cultivation. Along the coast stretches a wonderful belt of these trees, seventy miles in length and seven miles broad, reaching in an almost unbroken line from Man-chow up through Lo-hwai and Hwai-tung to Wan-chang. This great tract yields the chief supply of cocoa-nuts, that go in junks to all parts of the mainland.

From Ka-chik we took the road to Hwai-tung, crossing at the outset a muddy stream on a high stone bridge, and passing through an attractive country, with waving palms overtopping the lower shrubbery of the village groves and rice fields, which had just yielded their rich supplies for the sustenance of the people. The Hwai-tung pagoda made a beautiful picture, as it rose in the midst of a small grove, a short distance outside the city, but the city itself was of the most dreary description; old, dilapidated, and strewn with unsightly ruins, with none of the picturesqueness or wealth of vegetation that not only relieved, but gave a positive charm to some of the other ruined cities we had seen.

It was our intention to go to Wan-chang and thence back to Hoi-how, but the ill effects of the night journey down the Ka-chik river were developed in the form of severe chills and fever, which quite prostrated me, and made it necessary to return by the nearest and easiest way. My friend also was laid low a few days later from the same cause, so that the end of our journey was not so joyous as the beginning. Taking sedan chairs from Hwai-tung, we struck for the nearest point on the Hoi-how river. Our path soon merged into the main line of travel to Ka-chik, along which incessant lines of coolies were carrying merchandise which had come by boat to Kiu-chow, such as piece goods, matches, lamps, kerosene, etc. Many towns were passed in which inns seemed to outnumber the other houses, and to do a thriving business with the endless lines of carriers. Companies of well-dressed men, with coolies carrying their baggage, were seen, probably on their return from Singapore, or other places to the south, after years of service, with a fair competence. I was startled from a quiet contemplation of the passing scene by hearing the familiar salutation, "Hello, sir!" and looking up saw a well-dressed young man, with a smiling countenance, evidently pleased at being noticed. Large numbers from this part of the island go to the Straits, and places further south, as those from nearer Canton go to America and Australia. We travelled twenty-five miles the first day, lodged in the town of Kü-ting, and reached the river at noon next day. Thence our journey was by boat, which took us to Hoi-how in the night, and landed us for breakfast at my friend's quarters.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE ISLAND.



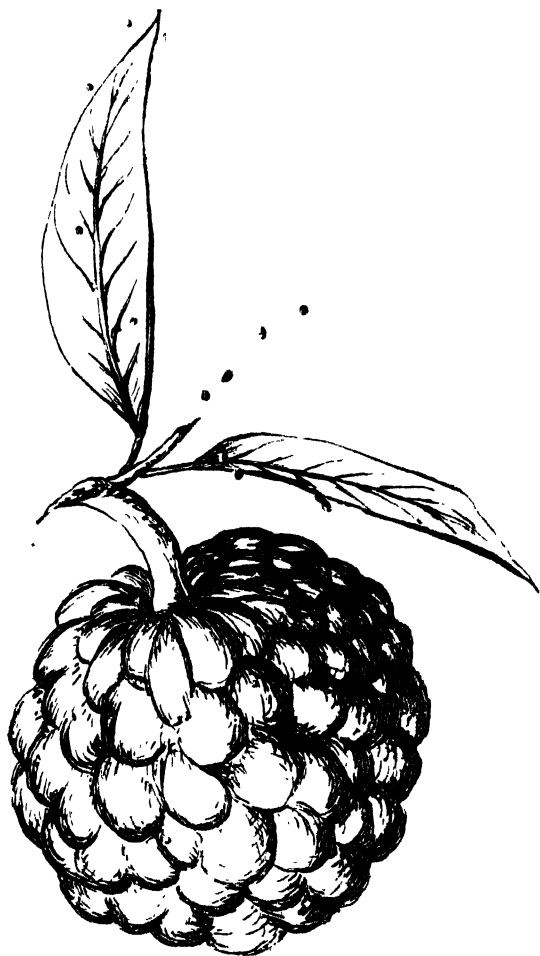
THE narrative of personal experience ended, it only remains to add a few remarks of a general nature before bidding adieu to this interesting island.

An outline of the topography has been partially given, but for the sake of definiteness, we may say in general that the whole northern half of the island is a plain, level to a great extent, but mostly undulating, and broken in a few places by isolated hills and low ridges. The central and southern portions are mountainous, the highest elevation being reached in the Five-Finger and Le Mother ranges, from which all the larger streams take their rise. Beginning as clear, sparkling mountain brooks, some of these streams, by a long course through reed and grass-grown tracts, become miasmatic and brackish.

In the political divisions of the island, eleven of the thirteen districts converge to a centre near the great hills, some of them running in narrow slices for many miles into the wild mountain country. The line of the watercourses may have influenced this division,

as well as the desire that each district should, as far as possible, share in the beneficent influences supposed to emanate from great mountains in the centre. As to the line of division between the Chinese and Le possessions, much misapprehension has resulted from placing it arbitrarily at a certain distance from the coast. In general I think the limits of the Le districts might be placed at five miles inland from Ling-mun on the north, the same distance inland from Nam-fung on the west, while to the south, in parts of Chang-fa, Kom-yen, and Ling-shan, their possessions extend to the coast itself, their rugged hills, covered with impassable jungle, reaching down to the very sea; and only a narrow fringe of territory remains in the hands of the Chinese in the south of Ny-chow.

The flora of the island has been but slightly investigated; enough however is known to show that it is of great variety and interest. The late Mr. Swinhoe brought away specimens of nearly one hundred plants, and during my journey I endeavoured to collect additional ones, but was greatly hampered by the difficulty of drying them properly in the prevailing dampness we encountered, and of carrying them from place to place. Beside noting about one hundred, which I recognised as well known, I brought back two hundred species which are now in process of determination by the distinguished botanists of south China. Many of them have proved to be common enough, but a fair proportion are new and interesting, among them being three species of oak, all of which promise to be new. Several kinds of fragrant wood come from the hills, but are only known as prepared



THE CUSTARD APPLE,

for market, not botanically. At least six kinds of palm have been noted, the cocoa-nut, the betel-nut, the fan, the *corypha*, the date, and one other kind. Several species of rattan occur besides teak, rosewood, castanopsis, and tea, growing wild on the inner hills. The fruits are of great variety. There is the cocoa-nut *par excellence*, the jack fruit, and its cousin the bread fruit; papayas of singular richness, and to the south the custard apple in perfection, and a fine variety of date. The oranges are not superior, but bananas and pine-apples attain great perfection; limes, mangoes, carombolas, pumelos, lichees, longans, tamarinds, and other smaller fruits are found.

All this indicates an inviting field for the student of nature, and raises many questions of interest to the professional botanist. The slopes of the inner hills are still a virgin field, and are, no doubt, rich in many beautiful and unknown species, both among the trees that compose their forests, and the smaller plants that cover their shaded sides. From what is now known, the flora seems more nearly allied to that of the islands to the south, where the aboriginal race holds its affinity, than to that of the mainland adjacent.

In regard to the fauna, we are indebted to the late Mr. Swinhoe for the most that is known. Our observations, as far as they extended, confirm the results of his study of the natural history of Hainan. The number and variety of birds seen is surprising. Many families are represented, from the great cranes standing three feet high, to the fairy-like palm-swifts, not much larger than humming-birds, that dart like gleams of sunshine through the cocoa-nut groves; from the spotted snake-eagles that

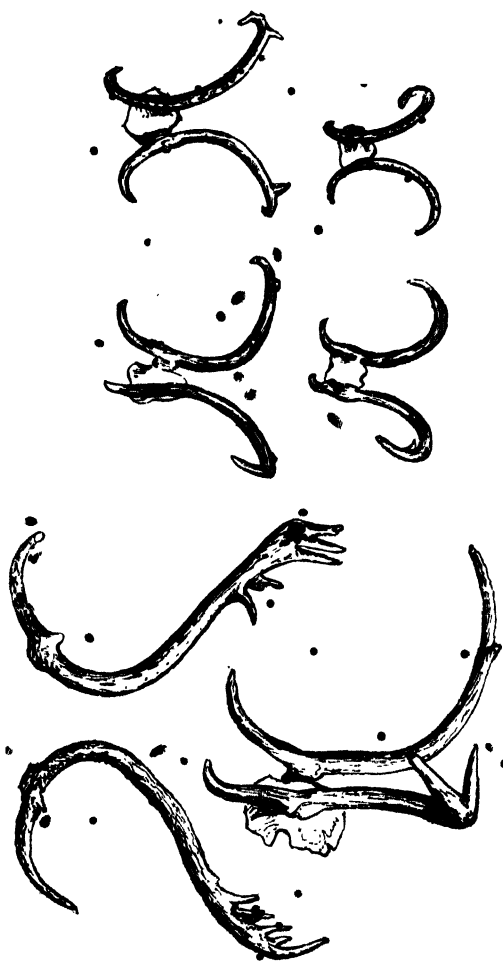


THE HAINAN HARE (*Lepus hainanus*).

soar aloft in circles, uttering their squealing cries, to the industrious little tailor-birds. Crows, magpies, hawks, thrushes, sunbirds, bul-buls, etc., make up the feathered tribes, of which Mr. Swinhoe noted one hundred and seventy-two species, nineteen of which proved new to science, and were first described by him. His journey being of only a few weeks' duration, and chiefly along the coast, makes it probable that many new discoveries in ornithology will be made when the interior is better known. Our splendid silver pheasant, which he sought for in vain, makes one fine addition to the list.

Of the mammals still less is known than of the birds. They are of many kinds, and apparently numerous, varying from the black bear to the little striped squirrel, and from the ridiculous monkey to the sleepy ant-eater. Mr. Swinhoe describes two monkeys, a small and a larger species; three civits, a leopard, two otters, the Thibetan black bear, two squirrels, a hare of a new species peculiar to Hainan, and called *Lepus hainanus*; three species of deer—namely, the *Cervus Eldi*, a large kind with peculiarly curved antlers, called by the natives the "Shan-ma," or "mountain horse;" the sambar deer (*C. rusa*), with large branching antlers; and the muntjac deer (*C. Reevesii*), a small species quite plentiful; also a porcupine, a wild hog, an ant-eater, and several species of rats and mice. Reptiles, too, are numerous, ranging in variety from the noisy little gecko that creeps over the walls, clucking as it pursues the insects, to the great python, which gorges itself at leisure with hare, small deer, and other prey.

The variety of fish around the coast is simply endless. The great fleets of junks that come and go in the fishing



HORNS OF THE *Cervus Eldi*.

trade are evidence of the immense industry carried on. The fishing towns present some peculiar phases of life, not only in the business done, but in the people who gather,—a motley crowd from all parts of the mainland, oftentimes the very scum and dregs of the large cities, criminals fleeing from justice, and human parasites who only live by preying on their fellow-men. The products of the water vary in size and quality, from the great whale, only known in comparatively recent years, and called, after its discoverer, *Balenoptera Swinhooi*, to the petrified crabs of a former age, which form one of the staple exports from the south of the island, and are highly prized by the Chinese, who regard them as a remedy for certain skin diseases. The pearl fisheries for which the island was once noted seem to have been along the north coast, probably in some part of the Straits, but were long ago exhausted.

The meteorology of the island is worthy of study. Many pages in the local chronicles are devoted to the record of storms, earthquakes, and similar phenomena. The peninsula of Liu-chow opposite is considered the home of thunder, but Hainan is the favourite playground of the typhoon. The frequency of these terrific storms is proverbial, and the devastation wrought appalling. The exiled poet Su-tung-po has preserved his impression of this phenomenon in verse. In a certain year, the chronicles state, three of these fearful storms occurred in one month. Hailstorms are recorded, in one of which, in 1823, the lumps of ice were in size from a man's fist up to a bushel measure. The melting of this ice caused floods that destroyed the rice, bringing severe famine the following

year, which was aggravated by descents of locusts that devoured the remnants of the crop. In consequence people died of starvation in large numbers, and many fled to the mainland. Earthquakes are recorded as of frequent occurrence. Several disastrous ones have taken place in the present century. They have been felt in all parts of the island, the axis of disturbance running directly across from one side to the other.

Nearly allied to its meteorology, and perhaps in a measure connected with it, is the mineralogy of the island, of which very little is accurately known. We have already referred to the presence of various metals. There is also evidence of magnetic ore in certain places, shown by the deflection of the needle when vessels approach particular points along the coast.

As to the Hainanese people they are, as a rule, quiet, simple, and inoffensive, civil to the stranger, but without much ambition. Individuals have from time to time risen to eminence, and brought honour not only to their native island, but to the whole empire as well. In speaking of Hainan and the distinguished men connected with it, those familiar with its history think immediately of Su-tung-po, the banished statesman. His is the first, great name which history connects intimately with Hainan. The shadow of banishment which brought calamity to him brought glory to this distant island. His poetic genius and practical wisdom enabled him to extract pleasure and profit from the most unpromising surroundings. Wherever he went he left a lasting impression, even by a mere passing touch, as is seen in the numerous mementoes treasured in the spots of his tem-

porary sojourn. His writings have cast a glamour over the island, obscuring as well as illuminating what he observed. His three years' exile in the dreary region of



SU-TUNG-PO IN HAINAN.

Ch'ang-fa were not only fruitful in the interesting narrative he has left of his observations of the people, Chinese and Aborigines, of the products of the island and its natural features, but in the lasting influence he exerted.

on the people. He represents them as stupid, indolent, lifeless, with scarcely an aspiration above the immediate wants of their lower natures. With the higher instincts of a true statesman he laid aside his own bitter trials, and set himself to instruct these ignorant people, and with what result? In three short years, long though they seemed to him, he imbued them with a love for letters, taught them the use of the court dialect, and to-day the monument of his labours remains in the dialect spoken by the people of that district, which, while differing widely from both the southern or northern mandarin of to-day, may, for aught we know, resemble that of Su-tung-po's time more nearly than any other dialect extant.

All this is in the highest degree to the credit of the great statesman, but some praise is also due to the docility and other good qualities of the people, which enabled them to profit to such an extent by the lessons of wisdom, and gave the exiled poet such lasting material on which to inscribe his name. If these people maintain such qualities as teachableness and retention of good impressions, there is hope of reward for those who seek to instruct them in higher things.

One of the first natives of the island who gained permanent renown was a woman born in the extreme south, in the much-despised district of Ny-chow, near the end of the fourteenth century. This lady, known as Hwang-Tao-p'o, was proficient in the art of cotton-spinning at the time when cotton was first introduced and extensively cultivated under the patronage of the Mongol emperors. It had for centuries previous been

cultivated in Cochinchina, whence it was probably introduced into Hainan. Hwang-tao-p'o was not content with teaching the people of her native island the useful art in which she was skilled, but left her home, crossed the rough and dangerous sea, and devoted her energies to instructing the women of the central provinces along the Yang-tsze in the art of spinning, thereby bringing greater benefits to the country than even the statesman so highly lauded secured. Her services were fully recognised, and a memorial temple was erected in her honour in the city of Kiungchow.

Of those who attained high literary honours and political power, the two most distinguished are those who graced the period of the Ming dynasty. The first was Kiu-siün, known in Canton as Yow King-shün, a native of the King-shan district, born in the early part of the fifteenth century. His grandfather was a noted physician, esteemed for his generosity. He attended the poor gratuitously, and on the occasion of a great famine, when large numbers of dead bodies lay unburied, he, at his own expense, purchased coffins, and had them all properly entombed, not forgetting the religious ceremonies and sacrifices deemed necessary. From his earliest years Kiu-siün was unlike other children. He showed great precocity in learning, and at the age of six began to compose odes which attracted the attention of scholars indicating poetical genius. One of his poems, descriptive of the great mountains of his native island, has attained wide celebrity, and is constantly quoted when Hainan is referred to. I give a free translation of this 'Ode to the Five-Finger Mountain.'

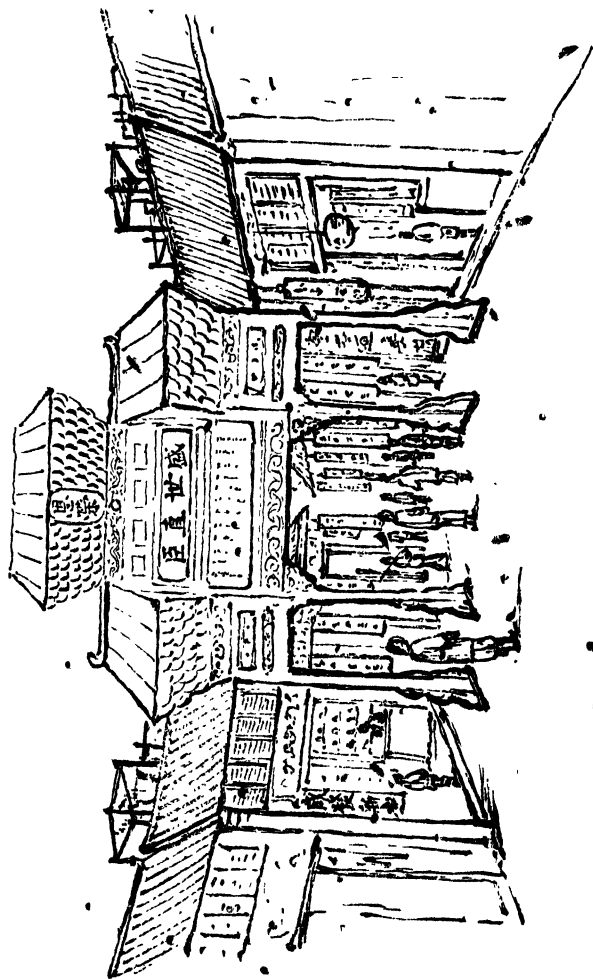
‘Five lofty peaks of varied hue,
As fingers joined in likeness true,
Abruptly rise in tropic zone,
Half-way to heaven, a wall of stone;
By night bathe in the silver stream,*
And pluck the stars that past them gleam;
At morn, through ether’s amethyst,
Reach down to play with clouds and mist;
When rain has ceased, their tapering grace
Pearl beauty gleams in space;
The moon comes forth in heaven’s calm,
A bright pearl in that wondrous palm,
What mystic form is seen expand?
The god Kū-ling,† with outstretched hand,
From this far seat beyond the main,
To count the realms of his domain.”

At the age of seventeen he took his first degree, and soon after the second. At his final examination for entering the Hau-liu College it was only his personal ugliness that prevented his being Senior Wrangler. He held many posts of honour and trust, and was for forty years a faithful officer, never using his official position to gain pecuniary advantages or for personal display, his house being in no way distinguished from that of his less honoured neighbours. As a reward for his faithfulness honours were bestowed on his descendants, who for several generations held important offices in the imperial household.

In the following century another eminent statesman,

* The Ngan-ho. Silver River means the Milky Way.

† Kū-ling means literally “The Great Spirit,” and is a Taoist term for what comes very near to the idea of a Creator or Original Cause, but is commonly applied to the God of Mount Hya, near Si-ugan-fu in Shensi province.



MEMORIAL GATEWAY TO HAI-SUI IN CANTON.

Hai-sui, arose. He, too, was a native of the King-shan district, and became a scholar, of great celebrity as well as a poet of distinction. He was advanced to the highest offices, and in the performance of his duties showed unswerving uprightness. His heart and life were devoted to the State, and when the Emperor Ka-tsing (A.D. 1550) neglected the Government, and devoted his whole time to selfish pursuits, especially when, under the influence of the Taoists, he was seeking for magic elixir to prolong his life, Hai-sui risked everything in an address of remonstrance. His memorial was a model of honesty, clearness, and good sense. He fearlessly upbraided the Emperor for his glaring neglect of his duties, by which he was alienating the people, his own family, and all good men, urged him to give up his foolish pursuit of long life, and devote the life he had to the nation which claimed it. The Emperor flew into a desperate rage, dashed the paper to the ground, and ordered the immediate execution of Hai-sui. The minister Wang, who was in attendance, remonstrated, saying he was only too ready to suffer death, having already bidden adieu to his family, and purchased his coffin in anticipation of the Emperor's wrath. He was, however, thrown into prison, from which, on the death of Ka-tsing, he was delivered and reinstated in office.

He was honoured after death with a memorial gateway in the city of Canton, which bears on one side the inscription: "In prosperous times an upright minister," and on the other the words; "The purest influence of Canton;" and one in his native city of Kiung-chow, which, at the time of the overthrow of the Ming dynasty,

was said to exude blood, showing that the spirit of the man who had so generously given his life to the State was still devoted to her interest. He was absolutely incorruptible, and although he enjoyed the highest favours at court, with constant opportunities to enrich himself, died in poverty, his trunk, which held all his earthly effects, being found to contain only a few cash. He has been made the hero of a lengthy novel, called the "Ta-nüing p'o-chün;" or, "The Story of the Scarlet Robe," where, through twenty volumes, his striking career in its salient points is made the basis of a wonderful romance, garnished with many mythical and fantastic additions.

In respect to the religions that have flourished and still exist, much interest attaches to the island. The Roman Catholics in the north, with the indications of a period of great success, followed, by their almost total disappearance, and their subsequent re-establishment in recent years, have been referred to. In the south there are traces of Mohammedanism in a mosque and school near Yü-lin-kang bay. At this point there is also a foreign cemetery, whose history is not known, but it is said to contain the graves of men connected with the East India Company during the last and early part of the present centuries, when this beautiful harbour was used as a place for laying up and repairing ships. The primitive religion of the Les is yet to be studied, with the additions they have received from the Chinese; and last of all there is the religion that is to replace all others, which at this late date is just entering the island with fair promise of good success, when once

the means of reaching and instructing the people are in operation.

Thus we see that Hainan in its history opens many attractive pages to the student, and in its present situation promises much of interest to the traveller and scientific investigator, in its striking natural features, in its imperfectly known flora and fauna, and in the questions that arise as to the race, religion, and probable destiny of its aboriginal people.

Brought now into direct connection with the world outside, it is gradually revealing its secrets, and opening a country that is full of interest. Its Chinese population, as given in the official records, has rapidly increased as the centuries have passed. In the year 1300 there were 156,257; in 1370 there were 68,500 households registered, numbering 291,030 souls; in 1617 the number is given as 250,524; the decrease indicated being due to storms, earthquakes, famine, and pestilence. In 1835 the population is placed at 1,350,000, to which should be added the Aborigines, whose number is yet a matter of conjecture.

THE END.

